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THE FUTURE LIFE

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THE FUTURE LIFE

ACCORDING TO THE

AUTHORITY OF DIVINE REVELATION
THE DICTATES OF SOUND REASON
THE GENERAL CONSENT OF MANKIND

BY

REV. JOSEPH C. SASIA, S.J.

R. V. Walker, O.P.

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TO

THE MOST REVEREND

EDWARD JOSEPH HANNA, D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF SAN FRANCISCO,

WHO

IN HIS EXALTED POSITION

BY HIS BRILLIANT ELOQUENCE,

ENLIGHTENED ZEAL,

AND DEEP RELIGIOUS EARNESTNESS,

MOVES EVERY PORTION OF HIS FLOCK

TO REALIZE THE EXISTENCE

OF THE UNSEEN, SPIRITUAL WORLD,

AND TO SECURE ITS UNTOLD TREASURES,

THIS BOOK ON THE FUTURE LIFE

IS

WITH HIS GRACIOUS PERMISSION

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

1. THIS work is the fruit of several years' patient research and strenuous labor. The views expressed in it are the result of convictions begotten by Faith, strengthened by reason and confirmed by human testimony; hence its title, "The Future Life, According to the Authority of Divine Revelation, the Dictates of Sound Reason and the General Consent of Mankind."

2. It is our purpose to make our readers realize more and more vividly the great truth that there are studies higher than those of external nature; that there are investigations nobler than those of the composition of the stars and the geological depths of the earth; that there are open to men studies more inspiring than mining, railroading, wireless telegraphy, and aerial navigation; in short, that men are capable of and fitted for activities infinitely more advantageous than the mad rush for the mammon of iniquity, and merely earthly goods. In Christianity we possess a philosophy of life, and the chief purpose of this work is to set forth some of the fundamental points of that philosophy. Our pages are intended to remind the reader that he has a soul destined by its Maker to flourish in immortal youth amidst the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds. The prevailing scientific thought of the day is almost exclusively concerned with man's body, how to provide for its comforts, how to solve the problem of its material subsistence and well-being: a problem, which, if carried to excessive limits, unfits the mind for the study and contemplation of the spiritual, dims the clear vision of life's ultimate purpose, and gradually saps the foundations of men's practical belief in the realities of the unseen world, in comparison with which the world of science, literature, commerce, politics, and all besides is but the vanity of vanities.

3. We foresaw that the publication of this book in this twentieth century would expose us to the sarcasms, criticisms, and ridicule of men accustomed to condemn and denounce anything likely to disturb their conscience and upset their cherished views diametrically opposed to the doctrines advocated in this volume. The editor of a San Francisco daily who sacrilegiously designated the ten commandments, the law of Sinai, as "the first freak legislation," is not likely to spare us when he will read in our pages the defense of that divine law, and will see described and upheld the awful consequences, which its transgression entails here and hereafter. As Mr. Oxenham rightly observes, in his "Catholic Eschatology," (Preface, First Edition), "It is currently asserted that the doctrine of eternal pun-

ishment, and indeed of future retribution altogether, is peculiarly repugnant to the spirit of the age, and that the result of proclaiming it is to repel many intellectual minds from Christianity."

4. Now if such objectors mean to imply that the doctrine should be withheld from publicity because it is not true, this alone would indeed be a conclusive reason against teaching it at all, whatever might be its salutary effects. In that case we should deem it a crime to follow the advice of a certain Anglican minister, Dr. Thomas Burnett, chaplain to William III. He maintained the grossly erroneous theory, that, "the doctrine of eternal punishment is indeed untrue, but it ought nevertheless to be preached." Here the real question at issue is whether the doctrine be revealed in Holy Scripture or not. If it is not revealed, then the question is at an end. If it is revealed, then we must accept it, or reject altogether with it all divine truth, and the revelation which discloses it. All middle courses are equivocal, evasive, and unworthy of any rational being. If a revelation be of any value, it is because it teaches the truth, and it ceases to be a revelation to us the moment we think ourselves at liberty to choose or reject any part of it, as we like. Indeed, a revelation which contains nothing but matter for doubt and conjecture, the terms of which are so vague and ambiguous that they may be explained by probabilities, which may be counterbalanced by opinions equally probable, is indeed little better than no revelation at all. Though the author generally refrains from controversy with adherents to Protestant denominations in deference to the advice of experienced friends, yet, as in duty bound, he admits no compromise whenever Catholic principles and doctrines are at stake,

5. The question then for us is, has Almighty God revealed the doctrine of a future retribution? Of everlasting reward to the just, and of eternal punishment to the wicked? To this query we give an emphatically affirmative answer. It is plain that we are now assuming what will be proved in the sequel. It is a question here of a truth clearly contained in the deposit of divine revelation, in the sacred pages of both Testaments and particularly in the emphatic announcement of Jesus Christ Himself.

6. If we except downright atheists and materialists, no opposition is made by any writer to the belief in the endless happiness promised to the just.

All difficulties and attacks on the part of our adversaries are directed against the dogma of the endless punishment of the wicked. As to this the question arises, namely, whether by a sort of a spurious *Disciplina Arcani*, we are to withhold that doctrine, though true, from the faithful and the world at large, lest those, to whom it appears a hard saying, should turn away from Christ and His Church. What Christ said to His disciples

in Capharnaum, His ministers are authorized to repeat now. "Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John vi. 68, 69.) When it is once known that God has spoken, our duty is simply to deliver His message to men, and there our responsibility ends, though that message, duly authenticated, be rejected by them. Undeterred by any hostile attitude we resolved to go bravely on, encouraged by the thought that we are writing for the honest seekers after truth, of whom many, thank God, are to be found in every rank, condition, trade, and profession of our American people, and the English people at large.

7. Fully endorsing the sentiments of the distinguished writer, Father Robert Kane, S. J., in his preface to "God or Chaos," I freely admit that my emphatic and unhesitating way of speaking does not come from any overweening trust in my own intellectual powers, but from an absolute conviction of the truth, to which I owe and render a frank and fearless allegiance. With the thorough consciousness, which I have, of the stern reality and justice of my cause, it is scarcely possible that I should not speak like a soldier in the battlefield, whose sword is unsheathed, and who knows that the victory is on his side.

8. Of course, I can lay no claim to originality in a work of this kind, which deals chiefly with the immutable truths of divinely revealed faith.

Our only merit, if this much may be allowed, is that of having gleaned from the vast fields of Catholic philosophy and theology, and from the pages of history what seemed to us the best arguments, and the most convincing testimonies available for our purpose. In other words, our effort has been to place within the reach of our readers the hidden treasures of the past with a view to strengthen their faith, and equip them with such weapons of defense as will render them victorious against the sophisms and deceits of the unbelievers of our times. To all human aberrations on future life we oppose the knowledge given us by our holy religion. Here everything concurs to assure us of the truth: the Teacher, who is Divine, the Son of the living God; the doctrine, a heavenly one, His Gospel, the wisest and purest that shall ever be preached; the school, the most perfect that is possible for men to frequent, Christianity, which He founded to transform the inhabitants of earth into citizens of heaven.

9. We are fully aware of the fact that some people, coming across this work, accidentally or otherwise, and seeing from the table of contents that a considerable space is devoted to the punitive sanction of God's holy laws, the eternal prison of hell with all its horrors, will feel angry with us, and close the book in disgust, never to open it again. By so doing they act like a judge who should condemn the person accused before hearing what

he has to say in his defense, and thus reject an additional opportunity of reaching the truth. No sensible man will approve of such conduct; and their conscience, whose rebuke they cannot stifle, will often chide them for their cowardice and bad faith.

10. Our purpose is to reach the multitude of earnest, sober thinkers, who are seeking the truth, and are honest and courageous enough to embrace it when found. In the many years of our ministerial public life we had occasion to meet quite a number of men and women of no mean culture, who, when approached on the vexatious question of future life, would give utterance to such expressions as these:

11. "You do well to uphold that view; it has a beneficial, soothing influence on the masses. But, to tell you the plain truth, there is nothing in it. Death ends it all." They will not censure us for believing; just the opposite. Oh, no! They feign rather to envy our happiness. They only wish they could believe, as we do. It would be such a luxury, such a consolation. But they tell us, they cannot. In fact they are too wide awake. "When we look," they inform us with an air of authority, "at future life from the point of view of modern scientific progress, the arguments alleged fail to convince us. The fact is that the existence of a future world and its allied scheme of forthcoming retribution may be a pious belief for the uncultured of our age, as it was for the simple folks of the dark Middle Ages, but it cannot survive the searching analysis of our twentieth century progress."

12. On one occasion, when a prominent physician of a western city delivered himself in the above fashion, I said to him: "Doctor, your view startles me. I have been taught for more than fifty years the exactly opposite doctrine, and I firmly believe it to be true. Please sit down and let us talk this matter over; and if I have been deceived, you will enlighten me." Any of our readers, familiar with such characters, will easily surmise the answer. "I beg your pardon," he said, looking at his watch, "in a few minutes I am due in my office down-town. We may discuss this subject at some future time." This is a very old procedure of unbelievers, which reminds us of what happened to St. Paul nearly twenty centuries ago, when addressing a group of sages at the Areopagus in Athens, he was told: "We will hear thee again concerning this matter."[1] He had talked to them of a phase of future life—the resurrection of the dead. That future time has yet to come, though I met that doctor on several occasions since. It is precisely this incident that suggested to me the present work. Hence from that day such spare moments as my manifold duties left to me were employed in the accumulation of material. This, in the course of time, reached a considerable size, as it contained upward of a hun-

[1] Acts xvii. 32.

dred volumes treating of both sides of the question I have undertaken to discuss. See Bibliography at the end of the book.

13. When individuals of this stamp coolly tell us that belief in a life and retribution to come is not in keeping with the progress and spirit of our age, our answer is, a truth, which has on its side the infallible testimony of divine revelation, the approval of human reason and the general consent of mankind can safely challenge the learning of the present highly cultured generation without fear of being silenced and refuted. From our impregnable position no modern scientist, however clever he may be, can dislodge us. For, as it will be seen in the course of our discussion, besides establishing the truth of our doctrine on an immovable foundation, we answer all the chief objections and difficulties of our opponents, and invite them to refute the arguments on which Christian Faith rests: a feat which, as we know from the record of the past, the enemies of Christianity have never been able to accomplish, though they did not fail to grapple with the mighty problem. In the matter of acknowledgment, it is but fair and just to remark that most of our knowledge and habits of thought are derived from other writers' works, perused in the flight of years; hence in many cases it is practically impossible to trace the special points of our indebtedness to particular authors, though to them may be due a large share of our mental equipment.

14. But we must, as a matter of justice and gratitude, especially acknowledge our indebtedness to the following authors:

THEOLOGIANS: St. Thomas; Bellarmine, Card., S. J.; Billot, Card., S. J.; Jungmann; Knoll; Lessius, S. J.; Mazzella, Card., S. J.; Palmieri, S. J.; Passaglia; Perrone, S. J.; Patuzzi, O. P.; T. Pesch, S. J.; S. Schiffini, S. J.

PHILOSOPHERS: Bergier; Cathrein, S. J.; Maher, S. J.; Jaugey; Liberatore, S. J.; Tongiorgi, S. J.; Urraburu, S. J.

PREACHERS AND ESSAYISTS: Balmes; Bougaud; O. Brownson; Felix, S. J.; Janvier, O. P.; Lacordaire, O. P.; Monsabré, O. P.; Montalembert; Nicolas; Schneider, Bishop; Vaughan, John, Bishop.

CATHOLIC PUBLICATIONS: American Quarterly Review, American Ecclesiastical Review, Civiltà Cattolica, The Fortnightly Review, The Irish Ecclesiastical Record, The Month, The Catholic World, Studies, America.

NON-CATHOLIC WRITERS: Dean Goulburn, Rev. Dr. Pusey, Rev. W. Reid, Hyslop, Thompson.

Ours being a critical age, to satisfy even the most exacting inquirer, we made it a point to verify every quotation, omitting important passages cited by others whenever we could not trace the cited words to an authentic source.

15. Aware of our deficiencies in the treatment of this mo-

mentous theme, we make our own the considerate words of Mr. Oxenham: "That there is much reason for apology for the imperfect discharge of a task of such grave responsibility, no one can feel more keenly than myself. But I had rather say something to the purpose, though it might have been much better said by others, than remain silent in the face of an acknowledged and pressing danger."

16. We fully realize the fact that many books have been written in different languages on the subject of our work, though few, if any, cover precisely the same ground. Hence we may justly apply to our volume the words of L. Annaeus Seneca, the renowned Roman sage:

"There still remains, and there shall always remain much to be done; neither shall be wanting to any mortal, after a thousand years, the opportunity of saying something more. And although all that we write has already been discussed by those that preceded us, yet this much shall be something new, the use and orderly arrangement of the things treated by others."

In spite of the old complaint of more than three thousand years ago, "Of making many books there is no end" [2] I thought that an additional one might not be altogether useless for the reasons given above by the Roman writer.

17. It would seem that in our days, when not merely thousands but millions of souls are summoned out of this world, and considerably increase the average mortality of the human race, a work on the Future Life is quite timely, since it treats of the destiny that awaits each one of the departed on the shores of eternity. Whilst the flower of European youth and manhood is mercilessly mowed down in the battlefield or sunk in the watery deep, and numberless graves are opened to receive their shattered mortal remains, their souls are ushered before the dread tribunal of the Supreme Judge of mankind and allotted by His just and irrevocable sentence to a place either of salvation or of damnation according to their good or evil deeds and the final disposition, with which they departed from this life. The spectacle of worldwide combats, unique in the melancholy history of man since his appearance on the face of the earth, cannot but beget in the fortunate survivors serious thoughts, and spur them to a diligent, conscientious perusal of a book intended to lay before its readers an authoritative exposition of the high destiny which an all wise and merciful Creator has assigned to every human being born into this world, the arena in which man, by a brave, successful and persevering combat against sin, aided by God's all powerful grace, can secure to himself a most happy home in the everlasting abode of angels and saints, the abode of unruffled peace, whence war and strife are forever banished.

Among the many millions of souls, who have departed from

[2] Ecclesiastes xii. 12.

this life in the faith, fear and love of Christ their Saviour, there must, doubtless, be numbers who owe their first serious thoughts, under God, to the agency of a wholesome and timely realization of their accountability to God's judgment, and of the retribution either of happiness or of woe awaiting every mortal on the shores of eternity. Would that such earnest, noble-minded souls were multiplied a thousandfold! Alas!—it is the obstinate aversion to that which contravenes men's wrong notions of the divine offense; it is the determination to explain away the plainest and most emphatic words of Holy Scripture that constitutes their real danger. If by reproducing the clearest language of Holy Writ on both the remunerative and punitive sanction furnished by God's infinite wisdom, goodness, and justice, we should arouse any of our readers to a sense of their peril, and lead them on to an earnest solicitude for their soul's salvation; if thus we should be instrumental in saving even only one soul from ruin, and should be so happy as to meet that soul safe among the blessed, what triumph of this earth could bear the most distant comparison with such a victory over hell, sin, and Satan? And what gratitude for any kindness here below could be like the deep gratitude of that soul toward one who had been, in God's providence, a partial help in winning for it eternal bliss? Our hope for so happy a consummation rests on the following guarantee of divine truth: "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins."[3]

18. If any person rising from the perusal of these pages should find himself impressed with a deeper and more reverential fear and love of God; with a stronger faith and firmer trust in the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ, and with a nobler conception of his present and future destiny, we shall have reason to rejoice at the thought that our labors have been amply recompensed.

May the Lord in His infinite goodness grant to ourselves, and to many souls benefited by our humble efforts, the grace of meeting together in the mansions of endless bliss.

Here we transcribe and fully endorse the words of Doctor H. N. Oxenham at the conclusion of the preface to the first edition of his "Catholic Eschatology." "While I trust that nothing will be found in these pages inconsistent with Catholic teaching, I need hardly say that what I have written on this solemn subject is unreservedly submitted to the infallible authority of the Catholic Church. It is a relief to turn from the din of controversy and the dreary skepticism of our age, to the simple (yet most rational) faith, which alone can brace the soul for its lifelong struggle with temptation, and shed over the dark valley of the shadow of death a shining light, which brightens continually towards perfect day. In the midst of the resuscitated Paganism

[3] James v. 20.

of our times in thought, in sentiment, and in language, which is coming in upon us like a flood, the words of the holy Prophet Job float back upon the memory, like the refrain of some favorite song, familiar from childhood, but which can never grow less musical by repetition: 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom.' ''[4]

[4] Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

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INTRODUCTION

THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM IN HUMAN LIFE

There is no man appearing in this world, even if he be the victim of religious indifferentism, to whose mind are not presented sooner or later the following inquiries:

19. "Is there indeed another life awaiting me after the present one? Is there above a Supreme Judge who watches me, and to whom we are all to give an account of our doing here below? Are there rules or laws, according to which we are bidden to regulate our moral conduct? And does there exist some kind of sanction devised for the enforcement of these laws; that is, a system of rewards to their observers and of punishments to their transgressors in a life to come? Why am I here? Why did Almighty God bring me into existence? What is the purpose of my life here below? What am I to do in this world, and what shall be my irrevocable lot in the next?"

20. These are indeed questions, the importance of which will not admit of comparison with any other. Science, literature, politics, art, commerce, all worldly interests fall into insignificance, dwindle into nothing, when set side by side with the momentous inquiry regarding man's destiny in the life to come. This paramount question confronts man at every turn. Whether believer or unbeliever, Christian or pagan, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or infidel, he must face it. It relentlessly pursues him through every stage of his earthly career. Its stern voice can neither be stifled by debauchery nor silenced by rebukes; and no matter how in life man may have tried to evade, or ignore it, it watches and waits for him at the very brink of the grave, on the threshold of eternity, where as the shadows of this world disappear, he is at last constrained to put to himself the awful question: "Whither am I going and what shall be my future lot?"

Hence no reasonable being, no thinking man will dare leave these weighty questions unanswered. The whole meaning of our life is contained in the solution of these questions. Life questions are they and they must be honestly met by every one that claims to make a right use of his reason.

21. Yes, first of all the question of our destiny must be faced and definitely settled, and that in a manner completely satisfactory to the claims of man's intellect, and to the aspirations of his heart. Till this is done, it is idle and nonsensical to tell men how they should regulate their conduct, how they should act.

How can we act, when we see no end worth acting for? How can we move forward, when we know not in what direction to advance? To fully realize the supreme importance of the religious problem, that is the question of man's destiny here and hereafter, it is enough to reflect that its solution constitutes the very foundation of both the moral and the intellectual life of the human race, and of the well-being and happiness of each individual man. Indeed, every institution connected with social, moral, and religious life must be profoundly affected whether for good or ill by the affirmation or negation of a future life.

22. In the first place, if the religious problem is solved in a positive or affirmative manner, then truth, justice, honesty, rights, and duties will bear a meaning totally different from that which would be attributed to the same notions and ideas if a negative solution were to be held as true. And other consequences would necessarily follow. For if, besides human courts of justice, no other tribunal need be feared in a life to come, men would shape their conduct in one way. Whilst if a future judge is to be feared, the actions of their life would be directed and governed by a quite different rule. In short, if a reward is held out in the next world to the observers of God's laws in this, then man shall so live as to merit the promised recompense.

23. If on the contrary all ends with the grave, and no future existence of any kind is reserved, to man after death, then the present life will be for him nothing but a passing dream, each one trying to make the best of it, in a constant endeavor to shun all discomfort, and enjoy all the delights within his reach. The conduct of such as adhere to the negative view of the destiny of man is vividly portrayed in the Book of Wisdom (II. 1–8). "They have said, reasoning with themselves, but not right. The time of our life is short and tedious, and no man hath been known to have returned from hell. Let us crown ourselves with roses, before they be withered: Let no meadow escape our riot: etc." Similar musings are met with in Ecclesiastes.[1] It is plain then that the right solution of the problem we are dealing with is absolutely necessary for the guidance and control of the moral life of man.

24. We must notice, moreover, that the character of his intellectual life depends in a great measure on the correct solution of the same mighty problem. That a man should master many languages, that he should be thoroughly versed in almost every branch of art, literature, and science is an excellent and very useful thing. But could such a man deem himself satisfied with the possession of such knowledge, if he were utterly to ignore the answer to such questions as these: "Whence do I come? Whither do I go? Why are there in the present life so many sorrows and so few joys? Is any one waiting for me at the

[1] iii. 12, 19, 20, 21, 22.

termination of my earthly career to demand an account of my doings and to apportion to me reward for virtue, or punishment for misdeeds?" Whoever neglects to ascertain the true solution of such problems cannot but become the victim of profound sadness and affliction, which border on black despair.

25. Two comparatively recent authors of the negative school, more concerned with the continuance of life after death than with the necessity of ascertaining the character of such a life and of preparing themselves accordingly, gave utterance to their grief in the following distressing language: Huxley says — "I find my dislike of extinction increasing as I get older and nearer the goal. It flashes across me at all sorts of times with a sort of horror. I had sooner be in hell a good deal." Very much the same hopeless sentiment has been uttered by M. de Genoude: "Some time I would say to myself that I preferred an eternal suffering to annihilation." Melancholy sentiments regarding the future lot of the departed occur very frequently in the writings of the ancients. They are like a dark veil spread over their works of art, sculpture, and painting. Quite tender and touching are the words of Tacitus in the life of Agricola, his father-in-law. Ignoring what became of his departed soul, and thinking that it might still survive in some place or other, he thus affectionately addresses it: "If in another world there is a mansion for the just, if, as wise men have taught, the soul is not extinguished with the body, mayest thou rest in peace." [2]

26. Secondly, the right solution of the religious problem constitutes the foundation of the well-being and happiness of each individual. When we consider the religious problem as affecting the welfare and happiness of each individual, man or woman, we find that it assumes an importance to which there is no equal. In fact, from its different solutions depends this obvious, inevitable result: namely, whether I must seek my paradise in this world or work for an infinitely better one in the next. If there is no other world to which the soul may repair after death, then we shall logically share the lot of those whose motto is "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." [3] Such individuals —and alas! there are legions of them—trying to persuade themselves that all the happiness men can enjoy is to be found in the present life, exert every faculty and strain every nerve in their struggle after pleasure, which, if missed now, shall never be possessed again. In this they are, at least, consistent, for if the existence of a future world is once denied, each man will endeavor to get here all that he can, and when, and where, and how he can.

27. But if, on the contrary, on the shores of eternity a judge awaits us, ready and able to reward or to punish us according to the good or evil deeds of our life, then we will recall the timely

[2] Agricola, 46. [3] Isaias xxii. 13.

warning of St. Paul, and act accordingly. "Brethren, be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting."[4] Hence for each rational human creature the solution of the religious problem is the key to his happiness here and hereafter.

28. From it man learns another most useful, nay, necessary, lesson: that is, whether he should, in the present life, look upon himself as a servant or as a master, whether he is an independent being or subject to the Supreme Creator that gave him existence, with all its consequent gifts, to whose service, honor, and glory he should direct all the activities of his present life.

From the true solution of that momentous problem man will also learn that he lives not to rule, but to serve; not to indulge his inordinate passions and cravings, but to curb, control, and subdue them. In short, he learns so to direct the actions of his responsible life as to harmonize them with the will of his Maker.

29. To emphasize the religious problem in yet stronger terms, we ask: Is there a destiny awaiting man beyond the grave, or must he utterly perish like the trees of the forest, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea? Is his existence, so ennobled by the lavish profusion of divine gifts, to be limited to the narrow horizon of the present life, or is it to be extended to the shoreless ocean of the eternal years? Though limited in his nature and finite in his faculties, man possesses nevertheless an intellect, whose capacity no earthly knowledge can fill: he possesses a heart, whose aspirations no temporal goods can fully gratify. What, then, shall be the perfect, boundless object of his knowledge, what immense good shall fill the cravings of his will?

30. To answer these questions is to solve the problem of life. Let us see who can accomplish this mighty task. As politeness requires that we should give our first attention to strangers, let me ask: How do modern infidels and unbelievers meet these questions? How do they face these awful problems? The answer is not far for us to seek. Whilst they sneer and scoff at the teachings of Christian faith, whilst they ridicule and set aside divine revelation as a myth, as masters in Israel they profess to have something to say on those all important, absorbing questions. By all means let us hear them. What have they to tell us on those vital points, on which our eternal welfare depends? What have they to say? Will they unravel the mystery? Will they solve the problem? Hear their answer.

31. In the words of one of their representative organs, an infidel journal, the *Investigator* of Boston, their answer is reduced to the following or similar terms: "We expect that in the next world we shall have a more comprehensive view of the mysteries

[4] Gal. vi. 7, 8.

of this." As Goethe puts it, "We may well leave the next world to reveal itself to us in due time; we shall be soon enough there, and know all about it." That is, when we are gone, dead and buried, when we shall find ourselves in the next world, then we shall learn how we ought to have behaved in this. Alas! What a pity that we cannot afford to wait! Our time is precious, our days are few and fleeting, we are hurried on so rapidly that our destiny will be sealed forever, before the promised vision comes.

32. But if infidel authors have no light to throw upon the gloom of the future, they have plenty of darkness by which to obstruct the light. Their system, if it may be so called, is not constructive; its efficacy lies in destruction. Instead of building up, they are continually pulling down. If, by their own confession, they cannot teach us anything concerning the future life, they strive to console us by the assurance that there is nothing to be learned. They cannot build, but they are eminently practised in the art of undermining. They devote their talent, energy, and wealth to spread the curse of religious indifference and unbelief among their fellow-men, thus striving to rob them of the noble, elevating, cheering prospects held out by Christian faith, assured by Christian hope and realized by Christian love. This is exactly the thought tersely expressed by St. Augustine who thus wrote in his comment on the eleventh chapter of St. John's Gospel: "Christ, our divine Master and King, came upon earth to bring to the kingdom of heaven all that will believe in His Gospel, trust in His promises, and make Him the center of their love"—"*Ut in regnum cœlorum credentes, sperantes, amantes, perducat.*" These reflections cause me to remember the following incident, that illustrates the disastrous effects of antichristian doctrines on the mind of common people.

33. We are told that Robert Ingersoll, the notorious antichristian lecturer, who, overtaken by a sudden death has since gone to his accounts, was one morning seated in a Washington City hotel, when a United States Senator coming in said:

"Mr. Ingersoll, I saw a sad thing a moment ago. While a man was struggling across a crowded street on crutches, I saw another man strike the crutches away from him."

Ingersoll arose with fingers twitching and eyes flashing, and he said:

"I should like to find that man, and I would punish him."

The Senator put his hand on Ingersoll's shoulder and said:

"You are the man. That is what you have been doing for years, striking away the crutches of people, removing the underpinning of their Christian faith, their support in sorrow, and prospective consolations amidst the trials of life."

34. With all the boasted progress of modern civilization, with all the giant strides of the human intellect in every sphere of

secular knowledge, and in every field of scientific research, what, I ask, should we know with any degree of certainty, even in this twentieth century of ours, of our origin, of our supernatural destiny, of the purpose and meaning of our brief existence in this world, and of the eternity that awaits us beyond the tomb, what, I say, should we know of all these paramount questions, without the torch of heavenly faith, without light from above, which, like a beacon set on the mountain-top to guide the tempest-tossed mariner into the harbor of safety, dispels from the human mind the clouds of error and deception, and points out to men with unerring voice the path that leads them to eternal bliss.

35. It was precisely to preserve the human mind from all danger of error and deception in a matter that concerns our most vital interests both of time and of eternity, and determines the right direction of the actions of our responsible life, it was for this object, I say, that God Himself, with a providential care worthy of His infinite wisdom and goodness, has revealed to His intelligent creatures upon earth the true answer to that gravest of questions. As it will be shown in the first part of this work, man's present destiny is wholly supernatural; that is, above and beyond the exigencies and claims of mere nature, and therefore depending on the bounty and generosity of God's free will. As such it cannot be known except from God Himself, who along with it revealed and established the supernatural means enabling us to attain it. I say "supernatural means," advisedly, for as reason itself teaches us, the means must be proportionate to the end, which is wholly supernatural.

36. Evidently divine revelation alone can solve the problem of life and explain the true meaning and purpose of our earthly existence; but not a revelation, mind well, read by every man's whim, and tampered with by every man's private judgment, but a revelation interpreted and expounded by the unerring voice of the Church of Christ, the divinely appointed teacher of men, protected against all errors and deception by the divine assurance of Him who nearly twenty centuries ago, said to His Apostles: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth."[5] Hence, strengthened by the Holy Ghost, as did the first members of the teaching Church, so do their legitimate successors impart to human generations the full body or deposit of divine truth regarding man's origin, his supernatural end, and the means by which to secure it. In listening to their voice, we submit to the voice of God Himself speaking to men through His Church; of that Church, I mean, who alone can produce before the world the credentials and testimonials of her heavenly mission, authorizing her to teach in the name of God, as the very mouthpiece of

[5] John xiv. 16; xvi. 13.

divine truth; that Church, I say, who alone can trace back, through an unbroken tradition of nineteen hundred years, the divine commission to announce to all human generations the heavenly message of salvation brought upon earth by her Founder, the Incarnate Son of God, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

37. Such a Church certainly has the authority and competence to speak on the problem of life and if she speaks, she undubtedly has the right to be heard.

Our Blessed Saviour's provision for the safe guidance of all Christian believers is briefly stated by the great Italian poet in the following verses—

"Avete il vecchio e il nuovo Testamento
E il Pastor della Chiesa che vi guida:
Questo vi basti a vostro Salvamento." [6]

"The Testaments ye have both New and Old;
A Pastor too to guide you is assigned:
Let these suffice; there saving truth you hold."

PARAPHRASE

You have the Pastor of the Church for your direction
With the Old and the New Testament:
Let these suffice for your salvation.

Here I am reminded of Dryden's distich:

"But, generous God, how well dost Thou provide
For erring judgment an unerring guide!"

Basing, then, her teaching on the revealed word of God, embodied in the record of Holy Scripture and the language of tradition, She tells us that, in accordance with the benevolent designs of Divine Providence, the world, on which we dwell for a brief period of years, is but a preparation for the next, which shall last forever. Hence the present is intended for the future, time is for eternity, death is but the beginning of a new life, and the gloom of the grave must give place to the brightness of ever-enduring life. It is, then, from the voice, from the infallible authority of the Catholic Church that we learn the noble, lofty truth of our origin, and of the high destiny awaiting us beyond the grave; a destiny so great, so precious, so sublime, that God, though infinitely wise, powerful and rich, could not devise for man a higher purpose, nor make him for a nobler object. To express this great, most cheering truth in simple words, the destiny reserved to the just, after their departure from this world, is nothing less than the vision, possession, and enjoyment of God, the infinite, perfect, eternal good, in the full splendor of

[6] Dante, Paradiso, v. 76.

His glory, when the creature shall be admitted to see face to face the matchless beauty of the Creator. "I," said the Lord to the holy Patriarch Abram, "am thy protector and thy reward exceeding great." [7] Glorification of God by holiness of life upon earth and everlasting happiness in the kingdom of heaven, this is the twofold purpose of man's existence here and hereafter. It is in such possession of God that the heart and mind of man find their highest bliss. There they have all they need and all they can crave. When the intellect is fed with divine truth, when the will embraces infinite good, and these are insured to them forever, then indeed man's happiness is supreme and the soul of man can crave for nothing more. This is the destiny promised and reserved to all human creatures who accomplish God's will during their brief pilgrimage upon earth. It constitutes and forms a happiness perfect in its object, which is God Himself, boundless in its extent and eternal in its duration.

38. The object of this volume is to demonstrate the solid, adamantine foundation upon which the sublime truths here enunciated and outlined are grounded, thus enabling the Christian reader to carry into execution the advice of St. Peter. "Being ready always to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you." [8]

39. After emphasizing the paramount importance of the subject we are dealing with, it may be both interesting and useful to take a general glance at the attitude of mankind toward this truth, the religious problem of human life. My task in this regard has been greatly facilitated by the perusal of Dr. Osler's lecture, entitled "Science and Immortality" delivered in 1904 at Harvard University.

40. Proposing to himself the question what hold immortality and the consequent future retribution have upon men, he distributes them into three separate classes, and states their respective attitude toward those truths. He calls those of the first class Laodiceans, thus assimilating them to the prelate in charge of the church of Laodicea, of whom the Lord says in the Apocalypse: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold not hot." [9] Practical indifference is the attitude of men and women of this class. While accepting a belief in immortality, and the forms of some prevailing Christian denomination, they live practically uninfluenced by it, thus exhibiting a wholesale contrast or dissonance, between their inner and their outer life, between their Creed and their conduct. Among the educated and refined as well as among the masses, we find no ardent desire for a future life. It is not a subject of drawing-room conversation; and the man whose habit it is to buttonhole his acquaintances and in-

[7] Gen. xv. 1. [8] 1 Peter iii. 15. [9] iii. 15.

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quire earnestly after their souls, is shunned like an impertinent bore.

41. Among the non-Catholic clergy, as we shall have occasion to remark further on in Part X of our volume, it is not thought polite to refer to so delicate a topic. The Rev. Talmage of the Brooklyn Tabernacle takes to task his fellow ministers for not having enough backbone of moral courage to preach the whole Bible, to let their hearers know that it speaks of the wrath of God as truly as of the love of God.[10] Most ominous of all, as indicating the utter absence of interest on the part of the public, is the silence of the secular press, though in its columns are daily brought into prominence the works of the flesh, such as divorces, reckless exhibitions of uncensored indecent movies and the like.

42. If among individuals we find little else but indifference to this great question, what shall we say of the national and public sentiment? Immortality and all that it means is a dead issue in the great movements of the world. Hence it may be said in general that a living faith in a future existence has not with our statesmen and politicians the slightest influence in the settlement of the great social and national problems which confront the race to-day. Men will spend millions in expeditions to the North and South Poles, in deep-sea dredging for a new, hitherto unknown fish, in biological inquiries into protoplasm or bathybius as a source of life, and in astronomical observations to ascertain, if possible, the existence of living, rational beings in the distant planetary worlds, or in any investigation that might throw light on man's descent from the lower animals; but not a cent is appropriated or devoted to ascertain with any scientific assurance what is man's destiny in the present life and in the life to come. I understand that thousands and thousands of dollars a year are spent in this country for athletic sports in colleges and universities, but no boast is made of what is spent for the discussion of the most advantageous questions that can engage the attention of man, I mean the solution of moral, social, and religious problems, the only ones that have a bearing on man's lot in the eternal years.

43. As we stated above, we reckon under the first class, individuals—alas! too numerous indeed—who believe in the immortality of the human soul, and in the tenets of the Christian religion, but habitually fail to show by their moral conduct the sincerity of their belief; hence inconsistency is their characteristic trait. Nothing could be more unreasonable and unworthy of any man that respects himself. "That a man," says Msgr. Vaughan,[11] "who has no belief in a future life, should center all his happiness and pleasures upon this, and should try to extract all the enjoyment he can from it, is the most natural thing in

[10] Unknown Country, p. 874.

[11] Thoughts for all Times, p. 312.

the world. But that one who professes the Christian Truth, who acknowledges that we are pilgrims and sojourners upon earth, who looks upon this life as a preparation for the next, as a short avenue to a happy eternity, that such men should take so great an interest in what they know to be so exceedingly flimsy and fleeting, and should attach so much importance to what they admit to be empty, vain and vanishing, this seems to me a problem difficult to understand." The Laodiceans, we are referring to are, by their own confession firm believers in every Christian dogma, yet they seem to be able to reconcile with such a profession a line of conduct diametrically opposite. What they openly affirm with their lips, they are perpetually denying by their actions. Can we say of such men and women, young or old, that they are working to secure to themselves a happy eternity? Are they acting on the Gospel's warning, "Watch ye therefore, says Jesus Christ, for you know not the day nor the hour"?[12]

Let the Laodiceans here described bear in mind the words of the Apocalypse: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.[13]

44. Coming now to the second group I find that Dr. Osler rightly designates them as Gallionians, because, like the Roman proconsul Gallio in the Acts of the Apostles,[14] they care for none of those things about which St. Paul spoke. They are men who try to persuade themselves that they have reached the intellectual conviction that there is nothing to hope for or to fear beyond the grave; that, at all events, all this matter must be put aside as one which we know nothing about. Hence, consistently with this sweeping denial, the supernatural is to be put altogether out of man's life, and the existence of a hereafter regarded as one of the many inventions which modern culture has done away with.

45. After hinting that the radical negative attitude of such individuals toward a future world is a product of advanced science, Dr. Osler takes occasion to point out some of the other achievements of that science, all more or less destructive of immortal life. They are mere gratuitous assumptions, which need only be stated to be refuted. They show the flimsy structure on which their denial is built, which, like cobwebs, can be swept out with a breath. "Science," says Dr. Osler, "has modified the views of man's origin, of his place in nature, and in consequence, of his destiny. And the critical study of the Bible has weakened the belief in revelation, and so, indirectly, in immortality."[15] These are bold assertions unsupported by any proof. The Christian dogmas on the origin and destiny of man remain to-day in their full integrity as they were when first divinely revealed. Hence the new-fangled doctrine of our learned Doctor,

[12] Matt. xxv. 13. [13] iii. 16. [14] xviii. 14, 17. [15] Pages 22, 24.

and of that of one of his predecessors, Professor Huxley, who wrote on Man's Place in Nature from the standpoint of Modern Science, have produced no modification whatever in the Catholic Creed. As to the Bible, in spite of the rash attempts and spasmodic efforts of Higher Criticism, the words of Christ, Eternal Truth, still remain likewise untouched: "Amen, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the Law till all be fulfilled."[16]

What do these so-called scientific men and Higher Critics gain by their undertakings? They call on themselves the awful punishments registered in the very Scripture which they are trying to discredit and nullify: "For I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book. If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City, and from these things that are written in this book."[17]

46. We are not surprised at this statement, for it simply bears witness to another of the many disastrous results produced by the substitution of private judgment for the infallible authority of the Catholic Church. If Dr. Osler and some of his disciples should come across the late W. E. Gladstone's work, "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture," they might change their opinion about what is supposed to be a complete demolition of the Bible by the attacks of modern Higher Criticism. "You Rationalists," says the Catholic historian Darras, "for nearly twenty centuries, have been following each other in unceasing efforts to destroy a Book written in the olden times by a few Hebrews in an obscure corner of Asia. All human passions are your allies in this warfare. Thousands of other books have been discredited by a merciless criticism, and yet you have not succeeded in destroying one page of this book."[18]

47. Then the medical sage adds: "Modern psychological science dispenses altogether with the soul. The old orthodox view has no place in science. The new psychologists have ceased to think nobly of the soul, and even speak of it as a complete superfluity." This reminds us of the silly argument of the infidel doctor, who denied the existence of human souls, because, forsooth, in his post-mortem anatomical dissections he never succeeded in coming across one of them. This would-be learned medico, like all materialists, forgets that a spiritual substance, such as the human soul, must necessarily elude the grasp of any material instrument attempting to seize upon it. The existence, origin, spirituality, and immortality of the soul are demon-

[16] Matt. v. 18. [17] Apoc. xxii. 18, 19

[18] History of the Catholic Church, Preface.

strated in numberless philosophical works, which no materialist has been able as yet to disprove.

Moreover, Dr. Osler "laments the fact of the futile search of science for the spirits." Though there exist undeniable facts proving the existence of intellectual, spiritual beings, different from the human soul, yet it is admitted on all sides that the chief and most irrefragable testimony of the existing reality of both the good and the evil spirits is derived, not from science, but from divine revelation, which teaches us, at the same time, all we know about their nature, endowments, and destiny.

Moreover, no one can deny the fact that Spiritism, though condemned by the Catholic Church for several valid reasons, bears testimony by its startling phenomena to the existence and activity of preternatural spiritual and intellectual beings altogether distinct from separated human souls.[19]

48. Dr. Osler says: "Knowing nothing of the immortality of the spirit, science has put on an immortality of the flesh." This is, on many accounts, a strange admission. Our Doctor, as stated above, held that modern science did away altogether with the troublesome soul by denying its very existence, and here he frankly acknowledges that science knows nothing about the immortality of the spirit. This is indeed a precious confession. Modern scientists avow that they know nothing about the soul, and much less about its immortality. Now, if they are utterly ignorant on this subject, by what right do they assert that in this world there does not exist a single soul? But what does this learned Doctor mean by the "immortality of the flesh," the triumphant discovery made by modern scientists? He evidently refers to the immortality of matter, which, in the mind of antireligious, so-called scientific men of our age, means its eternal existence independently of any Creator.

49. In the words of the late Cardinal Manning,[20] "The plain English of such a theory is this: 'Anything you will, only no Creator.' But if there be no Creator, then matter is increate, that is, eternal. Is it easier to believe an eternal flesh than an eternal Creator? An eternal slime than an eternal Intelligence?" A popular and, at the same time, a forcible refutation of the eternity of matter is found in Bishop Vaughan's article, "Evolution as an Argument for Theism."[21] The Saviour of the world reminds us of our Father who is in heaven. But according to Dr. Osler's view, the spokesman of modern scientists, we are uncrowned kings, for, he tells us, "the recent revelations of embryology deal a terrible blow to our pride of descent. For we are nothing more than the transient offshoots of a germ plasm." They accurately trace man's pedigree from a

[19] See the excellent work of J. Godfrey Raupert on Modern Spiritism; St. Louis, 1904. [20] The Religion of a Traveler, pp. 3, 4.

[21] See Faith and Folly, pp. 75 and 414.

mere dab of protoplasm to a simple cell, from a cell to a mud-fish, from a mud-fish to a ring-tailed spider monkey, and so on till at last we find him seated in the professor's chair at the university, clothed with cap and gown lecturing on his own descent. Thus Science, they claim, "minimizes to the vanishing-point the importance of the individual man." So it does indeed by assimilating him to the brute creation, thus verifying the prophetic words of the Psalmist: "Man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he hath been compared to senseless beasts and made like to them." [22]

50. We here submit to the reader two diametrically opposite views on the condition and character of man, that he may himself judge of their respective value. "Man," says Darwin, "is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the old world." [23] "Let man examine," writes Buffon, "analyze, and deeply scrutinize himself, and he will soon recognize the nobility of his being; he will feel the existence of his soul, and cease to lower himself: he will perceive at a glance the immense distance which the Supreme Being has placed between himself and the beasts." [24]

51. As the ranks of the Gallionians are considerably swelled by the numerous disciples of infidel, materialistic science, I deemed it advisable to analyze and expose, at some length, the sophistry by which they pretend to justify their unbelief in any future existence. But there are other reasons accounting for their hostile attitude toward the teachings of Christianity; and they are the purity of its morals, and the dogma of man's accountability to his Maker. "Suppress the sixth commandment," says Pascal, "and you will see thousands joining the ranks of the Christian religion, who at present remain outside of it." We may here apply to our subject what the distinguished French writer La Bruyère said of those who deny the existence of God: "I would like to see a man who is sober, chaste, honest, upright, declare that there is no future life, but such a man is not to be found." [25]

52. The third class, according to Dr. Osler's nomenclature, goes under the name of Theresians, which, of course, is synonymous with Catholics. The first thing that strikes us is the fact that the 290 millions of Catholics are designated by the renowned Doctor as a *pusillus grex,* that is, a poor, insignificant little flock. But this reflection need not dishearten us in the least; nay, on the contrary, it should cheer us up for the reason given by the Divine Saviour in His Gospel: "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom." [26] Another source of consolation the little flock finds in these other words of Christ's Gospel: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for

[22] Ps. xlviii. 21. [23] Descent of Man, vol. II, p. 389. [24] Zoology.
[25] Caracteres, c. 16. [26] Luke xii. 32.

wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it."[27] But before we proceed, we might as well try to help Dr. Osler and his disciples to realize what the small little flock of Theresians means after all. From a recent lecture on religion of the Catholic University course I became acquainted with the following calculation:

53. From the quite reliable statistics of the "Atlas Hierarchicus," by P. C. Street, C. V. D., we learn that about two hundred and ninety millions, or nearly twice as many as the members of all the Protestant Churches together, swear allegiance to Rome, the one Church universal. It has been computed that if all the Catholics of the world were lined up in the United States Army marching form, on the calculation that one hundred and seventy-six men pass a given point a minute, it would take the Catholic army marching without intermission day and night three years and fifty-six days to pass the reviewing-point. Arranged fifty abreast the column would extend from Havana to the North Pole; strung out in single file they would form a line two hundred and thirty-nine thousand miles long, circling our globe approximately about nine times. All this indicates that quite an advance has been made beyond the original one hundred and twenty Christians,[28] counting the eleven apostles whom Christ left behind as the rulers of His Church at His Ascension into heaven.

54. But to return to our subject, leaving the broad way and the wide gate to the members of the two preceding groups of men, the Laodiceans and the Gallionians, we Catholics shall be satisfied with being ranked as Theresians.

He begins by eulogizing them as follows: "They alone have preserved in the past, and still keep for us to-day the Faith." "Though a little flock," Dr. Osler adds, "this third group is the salt of the earth, so far as preserving for us a firm conviction of another and a better world. They have formed the moral leaven of humanity." But the Doctor, repenting, as it were, of the good things he said of this third group, thus describes them from the modern scientist's viewpoint: "They are narrow, prejudiced, often mistaken in worldly ways and methods. They are mystics, idealists with no strong reason for the faith that is in them." This last charge is a piece of effrontery as false as it is ridiculous, for it comes to this: We poor, narrow-minded, deluded Catholics blindly believe without knowing any strong reason for the faith that is in us. Then the great Fathers of the Church, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Gregory, Athanasius, Basil, Cyril, the two Oriental Gregories, etc., whose learned volumes, preserved to this day, expound and vindicate every article

[27] Matt. vii. 13, 14. [28] Acts i. 15.

of Christian doctrine, according to Dr. Osler, knew nothing of the faith that was in them. The schoolmen of the Middle Ages, headed by that unrivaled genius, Thomas Aquinas, and the more than twelve thousand theological writers that followed them, they also were completely ignorant of the reasons for their belief. And, coming to modern times, the immortal Bossuet, and the galaxy of French orators, Massillon, Bourdaloue, Fénelon, Frassinoux, whose volumes fill the libraries of the civilized world, are reckoned by Dr. Osler among the ignoramuses, for they knew nothing of the Christian Faith. And, in our times the eminent English cardinals, Wiseman, Manning, and Newman, the celebrated American writer Dr. Brownson, and other renowned authors of Europe and America could give no reason of their belief.

55. The Doctor then accuses Catholics of their blind submission to authority and their unreasoning acceptance of its teachings, however absurd. This other utterly groundless charge is easily refuted. Long ago St. Thomas Aquinas had formulated the doctrine of the Church regarding faith in these terms: "Reason would not believe, if it did not see why it ought to believe." He was then only repeating what a still greater genius, St. Augustine, had written on this subject as early as the fifth century of the Christian era, "God forbid that our subjection to the teachings of faith should prevent us from inquiring into the reason of what we believe, since we could not believe, if we were not endowed with reason." [29]

56. Hence we even go so far as to admit, in the search after religious truth, a legitimate use of private judgment, that is, of the gift of reason. This consists in the study of the testimony of divine truth, that is, in finding out the teacher divinely appointed to show us God's revelation, and to interpret and explain its meaning. When such a teacher is once ascertained, then the imperative duty of the honest inquirer after truth is to submit to his authority. But he would make an illegitimate use of his private judgment if he were to think that he is at liberty and competent to judge for himself what that Revelation teaches, to make his own fallible reason the test and measure of what he ought to believe or ought not to believe, and to pretend to be able to dispense with the heavenly appointed guidance and expounder of revealed truths.

Dr. Brownson writes thus: "I have been, during thirteen years of my Catholic life, constantly engaged in the study of the Church and her doctrines, and especially in their relations to philosophy, or natural reason. I have had occasion to examine and defend Catholicity precisely under those points of view which are most odious to my non-Catholic countrymen and to the Protestant mind generally; but I have never, in a single instance, found a single article, dogma, proposition, or definition

[29] Epist. ad Cosent.

of faith, which embarrassed me as a logician, or which I would, so far as my own reason was concerned, have changed, or modified, or in any respect altered from what I found it, even if I had been free to do so. I have never found my reason struggling against the teachings of the Church, or felt it restrained, or myself reduced to a state of mental slavery. I have, as a Catholic, felt and enjoyed a mental freedom which I never conceived possible while I was a non-Catholic. This is my experience; and, though not worth much, yet in this matter, whereof I have personal knowledge, it is worth something.

"I have found the Church all that her ministers represented her, all that my imagination painted her, and infinitely more than I had conceived it possible for her to be. My experience as a Catholic, so far as the Church, her doctrines, her morals, her discipline, her influences are concerned, has been a continued succession of agreeable surprises." [30]

57. When Dr. Osler stated in his lecture on "Science and Immortality" that an immense majority of men live practically uninfluenced by the thought of a future life and a judgment to come, he was uttering, alas! a real, though sad truth.

In fact, look out upon the world around us. Witness the lives of the multitudes. For what are they living? What is their great purpose in life? What thoughts are seething and swelling up from the secret recesses of their hearts? For the most part their thoughts and aims are bent upon riches, honors, distinctions, high social positions, comforts, pleasure and amusements. The sight of so much folly should force from us scalding tears. What is this life? A mere point of time utterly valueless except in so far as it is related to eternity, and wholly vain except in as much as it is a preparation for and a seed of future glory. Such is the true Christian view.

58. But let man but once persuade himself, as not a few modern scientists claim, that he is no better than a developed ape; and that between him and the beasts there is only a distinction of degree, of more or less; then but one more step remains to be taken, and that is to lead the life of a beast, to eat, to drink, to indulge every sensual passion, and to follow every low and brutal instinct, to seek pleasure and delight in gluttony, intemperance and impurity.

59. Let us draw the curtain over such revolting theories and listen rather to the voice of God, our heavenly Father, who with ineffable love has made us a little lower than the angels, has bestowed upon our soul the precious gifts of intelligence, freedom, and immortality, and will crown us with glory in His own eternal kingdom, if we make of them the wise and legitimate use for which He has granted them to us. Only in proportion to the extent in which we realize our high estate and keep the memory

[30] The Convert, chapters xix, xx.

of it ever before us, shall we live up to the lofty standard set by our Supreme Master and model, Jesus Christ.

60. We shall describe this destiny and the means for reaching it in the first part of our work, to which we invite the reader's earnest attention. In the whole range of subjects that can claim man's serious consideration, there is none more important than this, for here it is a question, as we observed above, not of mere possibility but of stern reality. If the conviction of the existence of future life is nothing but a dream, how can we account for its being so universal—for its being the dominating factor in many men's thoughts and desires? For it is indisputable that this notion is common to the race, bearing the aspect not of an idle dream or the subjective imaginings of this or that individual, but of a deep-seated persuasion essentially distinct from a mere product of the human imagination and common to the savage as well as to the civilized portion of mankind, as will be proved farther on.

61. As the golden ground, on which the old masters painted their pictures, lends dignity and splendor to the figures themselves, so the belief in the eternal retribution awaiting the just in the life to come forms the background of all our actions and imparts a supernatural value to the least things that we do and suffer. It is, so to speak, the magician's wand, which transforms terrestrial into celestial things, changes the thorns of pain into roses of merit and gives us a foretaste of the forthcoming felicity by the pleasure of anticipation. As the stars shine down on earth's darkness, so the thought of things eternal stands out immutable over the ceaseless tides of human affairs, and our soul turns to them for guidance, as the eyes of the pilot look at the polar star for direction, amidst the perils of the stormy deep.

62. I cheerfully subscribe to and make my own the wise and loyal utterances of Arthur Preuss, written over sixteen years ago in his valiant *Fortnightly Review*, and reproduced in a recent issue:[31] "As long as I can wield a pen, I faithfully promise, with the grace of God, that I will turn it to good uses, and with all the power at my command, and all the light that prayerful and conscientious study can bring me, untiringly champion the sacred cause of Catholic truth and justice, to defend which, even with limited ability, and in a narrow circle, I consider a greater thing than to occupy the Presidential chair."

The reader is hereby informed that the official decisions, definitions and decrees of the Holy See as contained in Papal documents, or in the records of Ecumenical or General Councils, are quoted from "Denzinger's Enchiridion," eleventh edition.

The quotations from the Fathers, Doctors of the Church, and other ecclesiastical writers, are borrowed from the following reliable sources:

[31] July 1, 1917.

1. "Enchiridion Patristicum," compiled and edited by M. J. Rouet de Journel, S. J.

2. "The Collection of Greek and Latin Fathers." Edited by L'Abbé Migne.

3. "The Faith of Catholics." New Edition. Edited by the late Msgr. Capel.

4. "What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment." Work of the Reverend Anglican minister, E. B. Pusey, D. D. Second Edition. 1880.

THE FUTURE LIFE

PART I

THE END OF MAN

CHAPTER I

THE TRUE END OF MAN

63. The earth, a comparatively small region of the solar system, is man's temporary habitation, the place, in which his life is originated, developed and completed. But what is the task which he is expected to accomplish during his brief sojourn in the present world? God creates nothing without a purpose or end. If His own rational creatures do nothing without some object or design, the same must, with far greater reason, be said of the infinite Creator, who could not make man, the crown and complement of creation, without a wise purpose, so that human existence might not be useless, so to speak, and meaningless. No necessity whatever pressed God to create the world, or man its inhabitant, for the infinitely perfect Being stands in need of nothing external to Himself. But when He once decreed to create, it was necessary that He should wish to attain by creation an end worthy of Himself. Such is evidently the postulate demanded by His infinite wisdom. Intending to speak further on of God's purpose in the creation of the universe, we ask now what is the end for which God made man? It is plain that here we do not inquire about the special ends, which each may choose at will, but about the general, supreme end, which the Creator had in view in bringing man into existence. We mean to determine what is the supreme and last end, to which be subordinated all the special ends that each individual may prefix to himself.

64. To explain this point still more fully the following objection must be answered at the very outset. It is said: Granted that human life must have a purpose or end to fulfil; but this is to be determined by each one individually in accordance with the light of his intellect and the inclinations and promptings of his will, the two faculties conferred by God on man for that very purpose.

We answer: So long as it is question of immediate and subordinate ends of life, it is quite true that each one may freely

choose his peculiar task, profession, or trade, and in so doing he is assisted both by his intelligence and will, so that he may choose aright, putting in practice the precept which old Horace gives in his *Ars Poetica* (38), in reference to literary pursuits:

65. "Ye writers, choose a subject fitted to your strength, and ponder long what your shoulders refuse to bear and what they are able to support."

In consequence of this liberty of choice one may select science, art, commerce, or any trade or profession, according to the competence of his mind and the circumstances and surroundings in which he finds himself. This is perfectly true; but we should not overlook the fact that all these particular ends must be made subservient and subordinate to one superior, uniform end; an end not intended exclusively for this or that individual, but for man as such, and therefore common to all men without any exception whatever. Hence this is not the particular end, for instance, of the scientist, of the artist, of the lawyer, of the physician, of the school teacher or of the university professor, of the banker or of the laborer, etc.; but of men and women as are God's chosen creatures and members of the human race. In short, it is the end which a bountiful Providence has placed within the reach of every individual of the human family, whether savage or civilized. On this account, the worth of a man's life is to be determined in the next world not by the measure of success achieved in any occupation, trade or profession, but by one's steadfast adherence to duty in the pursuit of his last end. For future life ultimately consists in a permanent state of perfection and happiness either forever secured, or forever irrevocably missed. The whole duty of mortal man is thus summed up by the sacred writer, "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is all man."[1] The great question of man's true end can be easily settled, and all opposite theories rejected as erroneous, when we realize this important truth, that Almighty God, through His infinite goodness, raised man to the supernatural order, and supplied him with the means necessary for the attainment of the end proper of that order.

The weightiest then of all questions presenting themselves to the thinking man are those that relate directly to the end for which man was created, the supreme utility of that end, and the means by which to secure it. As it has been noticed above, there is, no doubt, in this world a variety of ends or purposes, which each individual may have to fulfil; but there must be one which is universal, indispensable, and supreme, to which all other inferior ends are subordinate, an end imperatively demanding a most complete and faithful correspondence on the part of man. The various degrees of fidelity and perfection, with which the highest, last end is pursued, will produce either simply a just,

[1] Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

upright man, or a perfect Christian, or even a saint. True correspondence with our last end is the one thing that really matters. What will all the world beside profit me, if I fail of my destiny? A divine Teacher said long ago: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" †

CHAPTER II

IN WHAT THE TRUE END OF MAN CONSISTS

66. As we shall see farther on, modern, rationalistic science and atheistic culture, so-called, are shown to be utterly unable to find a satisfactory answer to the question of the Supreme Good and last end of man.[1] A perfectly satisfactory answer has been given long ago by theism, the science of God, aided by the luminous teachings of divine revelation, according to which God alone is the highest, final purpose or end of all creation, and therefore of man, its masterpiece. The world, or the universe, and all the beings they contain, are the work of Divine Omnipotence. To the question, for what end has God created them? there is but one true answer, and it is this: He created them for Himself, for His own glory. Hence, Holy Writ tells us: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself.[2] This, however, is not to be understood in the sense that God intended by Creation to secure some good of which He stood in need. The Infinite and the Eternal cannot be in need of anything temporal, of any good external to Himself, for He is infinitely perfect and happy from all eternity. What then induced Him to create?

67. The only reason or motive was His own infinite goodness, that is the wish to make His creatures partakers of His own superabundant happiness. It is evident that rational creatures alone can be conscious sharers of such happiness and realize in some manner the unrivaled sublimity of such disinterested motive on the part of the Creator. Consequently, as we shall soon see, they alone are able to enter into God's designs and freely co-operate with Him, whenever possible, to attain that end, the partaking of God's own happiness. Even at the risk of indulging in a somewhat premature anticipation, I cannot refrain from reminding the reader of the following divine promises, guaranteeing to us a share in the enjoyment of God's own happiness and bliss in the life to come. The Lord said to Abram, the Father of all believers: "I am thy reward exceeding great."[3] The Supreme Judge will welcome each one of the just on the threshold of eternity by the following cheering words: "Well

† Matt. xvi. 26.

1 See Introduction, nn. **30, 31, 32.**

2 Prov. xvi. 4.

3 Genes. xv. 1.

done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."[4] "Saith the Lord: To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne."[5] Therefore God Himself, in the same sense just explained, is man's ultimate end; and this for the best of reasons. For if the last scope of creative action were not God Himself, but some external good, He would depend in His will and operations on exterior causes, and would, on that account, cease to be utterly independent and infinitely perfect. God then is truly the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things, as divine revelation teaches and human reason approves.

68. To develop this truth still further we ask: But in what sense precisely is God said to be the ultimate end of His rational creatures? Not certainly, as we proved above, in order to acquire through them some good or perfection; but He brought them into existence for the purpose of sharing with them His own immense happiness and making them instrumental in proclaiming His glory. They alone, among all earthly creatures, are capable of glorifying God directly, for they alone can understand the wisdom, power, and goodness and other Divine perfections, which God manifests both through the wisdom of creation, and the far greater marvels of man's redemption. These conditions enable us to understand the lofty significance of the familiar motto of St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*—for the Greater Glory of God, by which he points out the sublime purpose or end of man, the glorification of God, his Creator and Supreme Benefactor. It is exactly through the fulfilment of this end that man becomes worthy of being himself glorified by the possession of heavenly everlasting bliss, promised in Holy Writ: "Whosoever shall glorify me, saith the Lord, him will I glorify."[6] Hence these two ends are so intimately associated and connected together that the attainment of the proximate end, God's glorification, will infallibly secure the obtaining of the remote end, the glorification or perfect happiness of man.

But let me explain still further these two ends. The proximate end, to be attained in the present life, is both extrinsic and intrinsic. The extrinsic or primary end consists in this: that man should glorify God by knowing, praising, obeying, and serving Him, that is, by rendering to Him the worship due to Him. It is plain that this glorification of God by His rational creatures in the present life is naturally and necessarily imperfect. The intrinsic, proximate end consists in this: that man by the practice of virtue and the cultivation of perfection, in other words, by doing God's holy will, renders His worship pleasing to Him, for no worship or service of God can be acceptable to Him, and be therefore worthy of eternal reward, unless it is accompanied

[4] Matt. xxv. 21. [5] Apoc. iii. 21. [6] 1 Kings ii. 30.

by a virtuous, upright life. So much about the proximate end and its distinction.

69. The ultimate end is realized only in the next life, and is likewise twofold extrinsic, and intrinsic. The extrinsic will be the perfect glorification of God in heaven by the blessed through the tribute of adoration, praise, gratitude, and love rendered to Him; a homage most pleasing to His Divine Majesty, because of the perfection and holiness possessed by the saints in glory.

The extrinsic, ultimate end will be the perfect glorification, and beatitude of man, when the Lord's promise, made to the holy Patriarch Abram: "I am thy reward exceeding great,"[7] will be fulfilled in every one of the blessed. Of this perfect bliss speaks the Royal Psalmist in these words addressed to the Lord: "I shall be satisfied, when thy glory shall appear."[8]

70. Therefore the chief, primary purpose which God intended to attain by creation is His own glory and this end, being absolute, that is, necessary and unconditional, will be infallibly attained by Him. The secondary end God had in view in creating man is to make him partaker, as far as possible, and in proportion to his deserts, of His own divine happiness. Now this end not being absolute, but conditional, its attainment is made dependent on the legitimate use of the liberty of man, when capable of exercising it.

71. If, therefore, man freely chooses to glorify God in the present world by submission to His will, he will perfectly glorify Him and proclaim His mercy and goodness in the eternal happiness of heaven with Christ and the blessed. If, however, by the abuse of his liberty and rebellion to God's will, he refuses to glorify Him upon earth, he will, in spite of himself, proclaim His power, glory, and justice with Satan and the reprobates in hell. Therefore, it does not depend on man to glorify God or not to glorify Him at all. The only thing that depends on him and is left to his choice is the manner of glorifying Him. By obedience to His will on earth he will sing forever God's mercies and goodness in heaven. By resistance to the divine will, he chooses, as his everlasting lot, the proclamation of God's omnipotence and justice in the punishment of hell. This is the object of our freedom, either heaven with Christ and the blessed; or hell with Satan and the lost. The alternative is terrible; but, as far as God is concerned, He cannot be robbed of His glory by the wickedness of men.

We must eternally live either under the empire of His love, or under that of His justice; either glorify God, His goodness and mercy by free obedience and endless happiness, or glorify His power and justice by interminable punishment. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself; the wicked also for the evil day."[9]

[7] Gen. xv. 1. [8] Ps. xvi. 15. [9] Prov. xvi. 4.

72. An additional evidence of the excellence and sublimity of man's last end and future destiny is supplied by the following consideration:

St. Ignatius says of the meditation on the end of man that it is the principle and foundation of the science of spiritual life; and it is so indeed. In fact, every science worthy of the name must rest on some general principle, on some primitive truth containing in itself, like a seed, all the knowledge flowing from it, as its natural, logical consequences. So long as such principle is not known and firmly established, there can be no true science. We may possess an assemblage of different cognitions and facts on some special subject; but all such truths and facts stand in the same relation to science as the materials gathered for the construction of an edifice stand to that edifice. So long as they are not so disposed, arranged, and placed in their proper position to form a complete symmetrical whole, the stones, the bricks, the lumber, the steel bars, etc., will form a heap, but they will not constitute a cathedral, or any other stately building. In such condition were several branches of natural science such as astronomy, mechanics, dynamics, before Newton discovered the principle and law of gravitation.

The same reasoning can be applied to that queen of sciences, the science of spiritual life, which alone can produce the virtuous, the Christians, and the saints. Its chief objects are God and man, and the relation between them, whence arises the virtue or obligation of religion. So long as the several truths derived from the relation of the creature to the Creator are not orderly arranged and traced to a general master principle or primary truth, which dominates them all and radically contains them, true spiritual science can have no existence. Now, we ask, what is that ruling principle and leading truth, on which spiritual science is founded? "Man," answers St. Ignatius in his "Spiritual Exercises," "has been created to know, praise, honor, obey, and serve God, and by so doing to save his soul." This is the truth, this is the principle, on which all wisdom, justice, virtue, and sanctity rest, the knowledge of the destiny of man. This chief truth is also called the foundation, for upon it reposes the whole structure of our spiritual life, the life of divine grace, the surest pledge of the life of eternal glory.

CHAPTER III

HOW DO IRRATIONAL CREATURES GLORIFY GOD AND ASSIST MAN IN FULFILLING THAT NOBLE TASK?

73. To explain at greater length what has been briefly stated above, we here ask: In what does the glorification of a being

consist? In the recognition, esteem, and admiration of its endowments and perfections. God possesses this supreme and infinite glorification in Himself, for He knows His infinite perfections in the clearest light. He rejoices in them with infinite love and delight, which render Him perfectly happy and infinitely contented. But it is not the internal, but the external glorification of God, that constitutes the end of creation; that, namely, which is given to Him by His rational creatures by recognizing Him as a God, infinitely perfect, as the supreme Master and Ruler of the universe by revering Him, admiring, praising, and loving Him; by submitting themselves to His holy will by the observance of His commands. It is by such voluntary homages that rational creatures glorify their Maker and thus render themselves worthy of the highest participation of His divine essence, which consists in the possession of eternal bliss, according to the words of St. Peter: "That by these [Christ's promises] you may be made partakers of the divine nature."[1] As St. Ignatius writes in the Spiritual Exercises: "Man was made to know, praise, revere and serve his Lord God and, by so doing, to save his soul."

As we stated above, the manifestation of the perfections of God, such as His wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence, constitutes the supreme end of creation. Here we ask: To whom is this manifestation made? Certainly not to irrational creatures, which, being destitute of intelligence, are absolutely incapable of receiving and heeding such manifestation. Therefore the manifestation of the divine perfections was intended for and actually made to rational creatures only, for they alone can discover marks and vestiges of intelligence, wisdom, and beauty in the universe, and extol the knowledge, goodness, and omnipotence of the Author. For, as St. Paul writes, "the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also and divinity; so that they are inexcusable."[2] The same truth is conveyed by an inspired writer of the Old Testament: "For by the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby."[3]

74. But irrational and material beings have also been made for the glory of God. "The Lord," says the sacred writer, "hath made all things for Himself,"[4] and they are intended to glorify Him particularly through the action of man.

Man, the lord of creation, is to be the high priest of the world, gathering up the dumb worship of inanimate and irrational creatures, and making them minister to the glory of the Most High.

This is the meaning of the sublime canticle sung by the three martyred youths in the Babylonian furnace: "All ye works of

[1] 2 Peter i. 4. [2] Rom. i. 20. [3] Wis. xiii. 5. [4] Prov. xvi. 4.

the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.'' [5]

In fact, all such creatures, besides contributing to his physical well-being and support, also reveal to him through their natural beauty, usefulness, and properties, the perfections of their Creator, His greatness, power, and goodness, and thus assist man in glorifying Him.

75. But let us see how true is the statement that the wonders of creation assist man in a marvelous manner in the knowledge and glorification of God, the Creator. As sound philosophy teaches us, every effect bears in itself the imprint of its cause. Hence from the quality, character, and perfection of the effect we may easily infer the nature and perfection of the cause that produced it. As the majestic structure of St. Peter's Cathedral reveals to the beholder the powerful genius of Bramante and Michelangelo; as the famous Madonnas display before our admiring gaze the artistic talent possessed by Raphael and Murillo; so the whole visible creation manifests to us the greatness of God, who devised it with His wisdom, and brought it into being by His omnipotence.

To form some idea of the manifestation of God's wisdom and power by creation, let me call to the reader's attention the following wonders of the sidereal world as revealed by astronomy.

76. Take as an instance the giant sun, the great luminary which the Almighty called forth from nothingness to illumine our planet, and all the bodies of the solar system. Its diameter is 855,000 miles. Its volume or bulk is 1,200,000 times greater than that of the earth, and its mass, that is, the quantity of matter it contains, is more than 800 times greater than that of all the planets put together. Its mean distance from the earth is 93,000,000 miles, and since light travels at the rate of 192,000 miles per second, it takes 8 minutes for it to reach us. As to the heat of that mighty globe, it has been said by astronomers that if the earth were to fall into it, our globe would melt and evaporate like a flake of snow. At the distance of 93,000,000 miles from our earth, were it not for the atmosphere that modifies and tempers the sun's rays, they are strong and fierce enough to melt a crust of ice enveloping the earth 100 feet in depth in a year, and cause all the oceans to boil within that space of time. The noise of the terrific disturbance going on in the sun is of such power that it alone would kill a man, were he placed within 5,000 miles from its rim.[6] The incandescent gases, which are seen on the surface of the sun, rise as high as 250,000 miles; they shoot out to these great distances at the rate of several hundred miles per second.

[5] Dan. iii. 57 et seq.

[6] See Pith of Astronomy, by S. G. Bayne.

77. As Sir John Herschel has well said, giant size and great strength are ugly qualities without beneficence. But the sun is the great almoner of the Almighty, the delegated dispenser to us of light and warmth, and as such the immediate source of all our comforts, and indeed of the very possibility of our existence on earth. In fact, let the sun disappear for a few days and every living creature on earth would be destroyed.[7] Moreover, it is an unquestioned truth that the millions of globes filling the firmament are all in motion with a rapidity that is bewildering. To quote an instance out of many, the earth on which we dwell, is actually whirling, rushing along its pathway round the sun at a speed far surpassing the velocity of the swiftest projectile shot from the most powerful piece of ordnance. On board this mighty ship we travel through the wide ocean of ether at the rate of 18 miles per second, 1,080 miles per minute, 64,800 miles an hour. We thus travel 1,555,200 miles daily through the skies, but never over the same path, as we are, so to speak, chained to the sun, and along with the other planets, their satellites and all the members of the solar system, we follow its course through starry space. Yet our earth moves slowly as compared with other globes. The star Arcturus, for example, travels over 50 miles in one second. The holy prophet Job refers to it, saying: "Canst thou stop the turning about of Arcturus?"[8] Yet the whole solar system is but a mere speck in the universe, an atom of sand on the shore, a drop in the all but infinite ocean of space. Now all these millions of globes are suspended without any support whatever. Who fixes their position and controls their movements? He that with His omnipotent power first brought them into existence and launched them into space.

78. The consideration of the stupendous phenomena of starry space cannot but suggest lofty thoughts and sublime sentiments to every unprejudiced man, and particularly to such spectators as look upon those wonders with the eye of Christian faith, as the work of a most wise, most benign and mighty Creator, "Who doth things great and incomprehensible and wonderful, of which there is no number."[9]

I firmly believe that the marvels of the world afford a new charm when men are not satisfied with merely contemplating the external beauty of nature, but strive to reach the intelligence and the power behind it. By so doing they are easily led from the admiration of the material universe to the knowledge, love and worship of Him who is its invisible Creator and omnipotent Ruler.

Nothing indeed contributes more to deepen in our minds the impression of the grandeur and majesty of God than the contemplation of the beauty of the numberless creatures, which He made to interest our knowledge, to excite our admiration, to

[7] See Proctor, The Expanse of Heaven. [8] Job xxxviii. 31. [9] Job ix. 10.

captivate our love, and to minister to our innocent pleasures and countless needs.

The more familiar we become with the wonders of creation that surround us in the present world, the brighter grow our hopes and aspirations of the realities of the next, of which the present is but a shadow.

79. How utterly contemptible and deeply humiliated must the sinner appear to himself, when he reflects that he, a puny worm of the earth, dares by his rebellion defy the Omnipotent and fling insults into the face of the Sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe! As the holy prophet Job writes: "He [the sinner] hath stretched out his hand against God, and hath strengthened himself against the Almighty."[10]

80. As we ponder on the marvels of the universe, our mind becomes overwhelmed and bewildered, and we are brought down upon our knees in admiration and prostrate prayer. It is, then, true that rational beings, helped by the marvelous though silent language of irrational and material creatures, can come to a greater and deeper knowledge of God's attributes and perfections and be thus moved to glorify Him, and render to Him the homage of worship, reverence, praise, submission, and love, to which He is justly entitled. If man, therefore, will accomplish on earth the task assigned to him by his Creator, his spontaneous homages, his tribute of love, gratitude, and obedience will be rewarded, as he will thereby secure the possession of heavenly happiness for all eternity.

If what has been said is likely to deepen the impression of the grandeur and majesty of God and to move the reader to exalt Him more devoutly above all His works, we have been more than rewarded for our pains. Any reflection which can aid us in arriving at a higher and more accurate conception of our Creator and Sovereign Ruler, and in forming a more correct estimate of the emptiness and insignificance of all visible things as contrasted with the invisible things, which await us hereafter, must be of supreme value. Our expectation of the future increases with our knowledge of the present; and the more thorough is our acquaintance with the marvels of this life, the higher will be our hopes of the realities of the next.

As we explained above (n. **68**) the secondary or subordinate end of man consists in the attainment of happiness. Of this, also called conditional end, we intend now to treat in several subsequent chapters. But we must first of all recall to our reader's mind a positive, undeniable fact, and that is the universal and irresistible tendency of all men to perfect happiness.

[10] Job xv. 25.

CHAPTER IV

MAN'S CRAVING FOR HAPPINESS

81. What kind of happiness is in store for man in the world to come can be learned only from divine revelation, which alone tells us with certainty the design of God's free will in our regard. But to show us in the days of our pilgrimage in this land of exile how conformable to our nature and its aspirations are the divine provision and promise of future bliss, God deigned to implant in our mind and in our will an irresistible tendency to happiness; a tendency and yearning, which, as we shall see in Part IV, shall be fully gratified in the life to come, when the prophetic words of the Royal Psalmist will be verified: "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory, O Lord, shall appear." [1]

82. We start our present inquiry by stating an experimental fact thoroughly known, universally admitted, and absolutely incontestable. It is the irresistible tendency of every individual of the human race to complete, perfect happiness. By happiness, beatitude, or bliss all understand a state of perfect contentment. When is it that a man is said to be truly happy? When everything goes well with him under every aspect. When he is free from every pain, grief, or displeasure, and finds himself in peaceful possession of all the goods which his heart desires. There are of course different degrees of happiness; but this is certain that only he is perfectly and fully happy who is free from all evils, and in possession of everything he needs for his complete gratification, and who enjoys all this in a permanent, lasting manner. For whosoever fears that some day or other he will forfeit the goods he possesses, cannot be called perfectly happy. The loss he is afraid of incurring, causes him to resemble the unhappy man over whose head hung Damocles' threatening sword. St. Augustine wisely remarks: "He alone can be said to be truly happy, who has all that he desires, and desires only what is good and conformable to reason." [2] Another quite correct definition of a truly happy man has been given by the renowned Roman orator and philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero: "According to my belief, he is truly happy who possesses all goods with the exclusion of all evils." [3] The moving power of every form of human activity, of every effort and work of man, is nothing else but the aspiration to perfect contentment, by the elimination of every evil, and the acquisition of every good.

83. Now a fact so universal as the aspiration to happiness postulates a universal, uniform cause, which cannot be anything else but the nature itself of man, perfectly identical in every in-

[1] Ps. xvi. 15. [2] De Trinit. l. xiii. 4. [3] Tusc. v. 10.

dividual of the human race. Man's highest faculties are intelligence and will. These faculties tend by their nature to the full possession of their proper objects; namely, truth and goodness. Our intellect is capable of knowing not only this or that particular truth, but universal truth. Our will possesses a natural tendency not only to this, or that particular good, but to good in general, in fact to every kind of good. As the intellect is not satisfied with reaching finite truth, but aspires to the possession of infinite truth, so the will is not contented with obtaining limited good, but craves for the unlimited. As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, it is exactly in the possession of all truths and all goods that perfect happiness consists. When the human intellect, as we remarked above, reaches infinite truth, when the human will possesses infinite good, and these are insured to them forever, then indeed man's happiness is supreme and his restless soul can crave no more.

As it shall be shown later on, this twofold object is realized only in the eternal possession of God Himself, infinite truth and infinite good. "Our heart," exclaims St. Augustine, "O Lord, is made for Thee and can find no rest except in Thee."

CHAPTER V

GOD DESTINED MAN TO PERFECT HAPPINESS

84. From the well-established fact demonstrated above of men's aspiration to happiness we feel justified in concluding that they are all actually destined to perfect happiness, and that it is within their power to reach it. For we cannot admit in God's realm such an absurdity and contradiction, namely, an irresistible tendency toward an object that cannot be reached. Man with all his natural impulses and desires is the work of God's creative power. If, therefore, the Creator has implanted in him a craving for perfect happiness, He has done so because He destined him for such happiness, and made it possible for him to attain it on the fulfilment of the conditions required and demanded by His infinite wisdom, goodness and justice and by the very nature of man. Nothing is more befitting God's munificence and boundless liberality than to make His rational creatures partake of His own happiness, according to the measure of their capacity. Great honor and glory will certainly redound to the Lord, as the most generous giver; but the advantages accruing from such divine gifts will all be for the lasting benefit of His rational creatures. We have, then, reason to conclude that if man is destined to perfect happiness, there must be somewhere an

object capable of rendering him perfectly happy. We ask what is that object?

CHAPTER VI

NO CREATED GOOD CAN RENDER MAN PERFECTLY HAPPY

85. In the first place this cannot be done by what we designate as external goods such as riches, honors, power, fame, or renown. They are only means through which interior goods of a superior order are secured, and therefore valued only inasmuch as they contribute to the well-being and perfection of man. On this account they cannot constitute his last end. Moreover, by happiness we mean a state or condition of interior perfection.

Notwithstanding all the external goods an individual may happen to possess, he himself may have many shortcomings impeding the enjoyment of happiness. Thus we cannot call a rich man happy and deserving of public esteem, if he is ignorant, wicked, and immoral. How cheerfully would multimillionaires give up half of their fortune, if they could by it recover their lost health. All know that no amount of gold can purchase intellectual ability, artistic skill, corporal beauty, or virtue. Then we must not overlook the fact that to render a man perfectly contented, his happiness must not be ephemeral, precarious, and temporary, but enduring and permanent. Nothing of the kind can be attributed to external goods, as they may at any moment be lost through the action of evildoers, or any other adversity. Here it might be said that having excluded external goods, we may find our highest bliss in those that are internal, intimate to ourselves, whether of the body or of the soul, such as sensual gratification, robust health, science, art, or moral virtues.

To illustrate this truth of the utter insufficiency of wealth, for instance, to make its possessor happy and contented, a homely example is likely to interest American readers, that of the late Hetty Green. She was considered to be the richest woman in the world, as it may be judged from the sum of $100,000,000 which she left at her death. But as we learn from the statements of her own son, Mrs. Hetty Green did not get much joy out of life, though swimming in wealth. The contrary was her sad experience, particularly in her last years. The criminal and fatal attack of Norcross on Russell Sage left terrors with her that never waned. She was tortured by the dread of murder. Hence, to hide her identity she flitted from place to place, hiding her-

self in cheap boarding houses, as temporary refuges from assassins. What a sad picture is here presented in contrast to the one, which many people imagine to be within the reach of wealth! Poor Hetty Green!

86. As to sensual pleasures, they evidently cannot constitute man's highest good, because they are common to the brute creation, and, if excessively indulged in, would lower him far below the irrational animals and ruin his health. Secondly, because the highest good is that which can satisfy the better part of ourselves, the faculties of the soul, intellect, and will; a truth perceived and proclaimed even by the ancient gentile philosopher, Plato, who remarked in his *Phaedo* that man's highest dignity consists in the cultivation of his noblest faculties, intelligence and free will. And what is said of sensual pleasures can be equally said of other corporal goods, such as bodily vigor and strength, robust health, beauty, and the like.

87. Will not art and science constitute the highest good of man? Here we must remember that the true constituent of happiness must be an object attainable by all men, and not only by some privileged individuals. Now how few are those who can afford to dedicate themselves to the cultivation of the sciences and the arts? And if they possess the leisure, do they also possess the talent or ability absolutely necessary for success? The Stoics held the moral virtues to be the highest good of man. But, however praiseworthy such a theory may be, it cannot be admitted, for all moral virtues are acquired faculties or habits, which help us to well doing. Therefore they are simply means of moral activities and cannot constitute man's last end. Therefore perfect happiness cannot be found even in the practice of virtue; for God in His wisdom has decreed that virtue should indeed merit, but not enjoy perfect happiness in this world. He has solemnly pledged Himself to bestow in the next world perfect happiness on all who should cultivate Christian virtues and holiness in this. And, rising higher still, we must say that not even the love of God, as may be practised on earth, can be said to be the last end of man; for he that truly loves God, aims, by this means, at the perfect love and possession of God; obtainable not in the present, but in the life to come.

88. But if created goods, taken separately, cannot make man perfectly happy, could they not, if put together, accomplish that object? Let us see. In the first place, how is it possible for any man to possess at once the combined assemblage of all earthly goods? Is not such a supposition contrary to all experience? As the old proverb has it: here below there is no rose without its thorn. In fact, what do we find, when we reflect on the different conditions of men? One may be rich, but deprived of the chief means of enjoying his wealth, and that is good health. One may be learned, but enjoys no reputation because of his vicious life,

and so forth. But the chief reason why created goods cannot completely satisfy the aspirations of man, is not their insufficient quantity, but it is their quality that is their necessary limitation, their perishable nature and inconstancy.

There are, moreover, radical defects inherent in all earthly goods, which no accumulation of them can ever remedy or remove. Man's spiritual faculties are doubtless limited in their scope and finite in their power; yet they crave for an infinite and boundless object, which no created being can supply. We feel then justified in drawing the following conclusion: Reason, history and the experience of nearly six thousand years unite their voices in proclaiming the truth, that perfect happiness cannot be found in this world. It certainly cannot be found in creatures, for they were not clothed with the power to give it.

The utter powerlessness of all earthly goods to produce lasting happiness and true, substantial joy, will appear still more evident if we reflect that they are employed by the Evil One as means by which to allure unwary mortals to his standard, the ultimate issue of which is short enjoyment and endless suffering. To detect his fraud, let us see what kind of promises the devil holds out to his deluded followers; promises that are most fallacious, hollow and treacherous.

They are fallacious, because he promises felicity and worldly goods, which he does not himself possess. In fact, when Satan tempted our Divine Saviour in the desert and said to Him, "I will give Thee all the kingdoms of the world, if falling down Thou wilt adore me," [1] he told the biggest lie that was ever uttered, for he owns nothing. As the Royal Psalmist says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: the world and all that dwell therein." [2] The devil's promises are hollow, because worldly goods and sensual gratifications never yet made a single individual happy. Remember Solomon's declaration, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." [3] They are treacherous, because far from producing true happiness, they are, on the contrary, the prolific cause of misery, remorse, of the loss of God's friendship and grace to the soul in this life, and the cause of eternal ruin to both soul and body in the next. "At the end of joy comes mourning." [4]

89. The distinguished writer, Msgr. Vaughan, in his book, "Earth to Heaven," suggests another process of reasoning, which leads us to the same conclusion. There are three self-evident principles or axioms from which we may draw this irrefutable consequence, that nothing in this wide world can completely gratify the cravings and aspirations of man.

90. The first principle or axiom may be thus expressed: In contemplating the innumerable creatures that surround us, we find that, in accordance with the divine ordinance, every being is

[1] Matt. iv. 8. 9. [2] Ps. xxiii. 1. [3] Eccles. i. 14. [4] Prov. xiv. 13.

made for something greater and higher than itself. Thus all inorganic, lifeless matter exists for the sake of the organic. The soil of the earth, the water, the air and other components of the atmosphere are intended for the support of vegetable life. Dead matter becomes a living substance.

Vegetation, in its turn, is made to subserve and minister to the wants of animal life. Purely vegetable life becomes part and parcel of sensitive life.

The endless variety of animals ministers to man, supplying him with food, clothing, pleasure, recreation and other comforts in a thousand ways.

The mineral, then, is made for the vegetable; the vegetable for the animal, the animal for man.

91. And what is man made for? One thing is quite certain: he cannot have been made for anything lower and baser than himself, for this would be against God's established general law. Therefore, whatever his end may be, it must, as in the case of all other creatures, be something greater and nobler than himself. And what is that? God and He alone. Yes, man is created to possess and enjoy God, for in Him alone, as we shall soon see, he can find the immense, perfect, endless happiness he is yearning after. Consequently man cannot have been made for any earthly goods, however excellent in themselves, for they are all immeasurably inferior to him. He must look up, not down, if he would discover his true destiny. *Sursum Corda*—Let our hearts be lifted up on high and sigh for union with God, who is the center and source of all goods.

92. The second, equally incontrovertible principle, is that God cannot design a creature for any end without, at the same time, supplying it with all that is necessary or requisite to reach that end. That end, if conditional, it is true, might not be attained if the required condition is not fulfilled; but it must, at least, be made attainable. Applying this principle to any earthly created good, such as wealth, honor, high social position, fame, sensual pleasures, or any other temporal thing, we find that an immense majority of men are deprived of such goods, not because they are not striving to reach them, but because the means absolutely required to attain them are wanting to them.

93. Passing now to the third principle, we lay it down as a self-evident truism of sound philosophy and common sense, that the attainment of the end for which a being is created will place that being in a state of absolute contentment, perfect happiness, and complete rest. Though no argument is needed to prove this statement, yet a full demonstration of its truth will be given in the following chapter.

94. Now, to sum up. In order that an object may be recognized as man's true end and his greatest good, it must be first above man, that is, superior to him in essence and dignity. Sec-

ondly, it must be within easy reach and accessible to every one. Thirdly, when once obtained, it must yield content, perfect satisfaction, and rest. What does not answer these three conditions cannot be man's highest good and his true end.

Now, taking the possession of God to be our true end, we find that it perfectly realizes the conditions and principles laid down above. First, God is infinitely above us. Secondly, all the means requisite to secure our last end, the eternal possession of God, have been placed by His bountiful providence within our reach. No man who sincerely and earnestly strives can fail to obtain his end. If he falls short of it, it will be only through his own deliberate, wilful fault. Thirdly, this end, once attained, wholly satisfies every faculty and desire of the soul, and renders it supremely happy, and perfectly contented. We repeat here the words of the Psalmist quoted above—"O Lord, I shall be satisfied, when Thy glory shall appear." [5]

CHAPTER VII

IS IT POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN PERFECT HAPPINESS ON EARTH?

If, as we have just seen, no created good, and not even the accumulation of all of them, suffices to make us happy, the foregoing question has been already practically answered in the negative. Yet a further development of this subject cannot fail to produce a still deeper conviction in the reader's mind.

95. Perfect happiness essentially consists in complete exemption from all evils, from every defect and sorrow; and in the tranquil possession of every good necessary to satisfy all our rational aspirations and desires. Now, the enjoyment of such a degree or state of happiness upon earth is an absolute impossibility. Our intellect aspires to the possession of universal truth. A simple fragment of it, attainable in the present life, is far from satisfying it. How scanty, how imperfect is all the knowledge and science which even the greatest geniuses may master upon earth compared to that which man's understanding will be able to grasp in the better, future world! It is like the glimmer of a candle compared to the brilliance of the noonday sun. Our knowledge of God, infinite truth, is very imperfect, and, in the majority of men, mixed with every kind of error. And what about the knowledge of ourselves and of the eternal world surrounding us? Can we say that men have succeeded in mastering it? When we contemplate, for instance, the marvels of vegetative, animal, and intellectual life, shall we say that modern

[5] Ps. xvi. 15.

science, assisted by the experience of past ages, can satisfactorily explain them, unfold their hidden secrets and lay bare to human minds their inmost workings and hidden forces? Not in the least. They are more than a match for all scientists, with all their boasted progress and parade of learning. Indeed, there is not a grain of sand, a drop of morning dew, a particle of dust, but contains marvels and mysteries enough to crush out of men all assumption of profound knowledge. Here we are reminded of the inspired words from the Book of Ecclesiastes: "And I understood that man can find no reason of all those works of God that are done under the sun; and the more he shall labor to seek, so much the less shall he find; yea, though the wise man shall say, that he knoweth it, he shall not be able to find it."[1] Of this truth, namely, the comparatively small amount of knowledge which even the cleverest of men can gather in their lifetime, the great astronomer and mathematician, Sir Isaac Newton, was fully convinced. He thus speaks on this subject: "In my scientific studies and researches I resemble the child who, playing on the seashore, rejoices at finding some shell or polished stone, while utterly unable to fathom the unexplained depths of the immense ocean, that lies before him." To the deficiency of knowledge in the intellectual order must be added man's still greater deficiency in the moral order, which springs from our perverse inclinations. Hence the difficulty experienced in holding the rebellious tendencies of unruly passions subject to the empire of reason and the injunctions of Christian faith.

96. Moreover, if we recall the numberless diseases man is heir to, the public and private calamities, the calumnies, wrongs, and persecutions men have to endure at the hands of their enemies, we are forced to confess that the present world has been truly called a valley of tears. But let us suppose the case of some favored individual, who has succeeded in amassing a colossal fortune, who has risen to the highest social position, who enjoys the esteem of thousands of his fellow-citizens. May we say that perfect happiness upon earth is fully realized by so privileged an individual? By no means, for sooner or later the cold hand of death will overtake him, and in an instant put an end to all his enjoyments, and rob him of all the riches he has stored up in his lifetime. And if he should unhappily resemble the rich man in the Gospel, who, neglecting his duties to his Creator, thought only of building greater barns, he will, like him, deserve the awful rebuke registered in St. Luke's Gospel: "God said to him; Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"[2] True indeed is the description of human life given by the prophet Job—in this short, pithy sentence: "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries."[3] On the tombstone

[1] Eccles. viii. 17. [2] Luke xii. 20. [3] Job xiv. 1.

of a little child we found this laconic, though correct, inscription: "In one hour he was born, wept and died." An abridgment of the longest human life.

97. To illustrate this truth by a most convincing example, if ever there was a type of a perfectly successful man, so far as the world goes, it was, no doubt, the great and renowned King Solomon. He was externally surrounded by everything that this earth can give. His social position was the very highest to which any man can aspire, for he was a mighty king, ruling over a great nation. Moreover, he was the wisest of men. No other could compare with him in the extent of his knowledge, both acquired and supernaturally infused. It is both interesting and instructive to hear him tell his own story and the lesson of his experience. "Whatsoever my eyes desired I refused them not; and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure—and I saw in all things vanity, and vexation of mind, and that nothing was lasting under the sun." [4]

98. If now we turn our gaze to modern philosophers and thinkers, we find them in full agreement with the testimony of the past.

Kant writes: "I think that no man of advanced age, with a correct idea of the present life, would be disposed to begin it over again, if that were in his power." [5]

Schelling says: "The veil of sadness which covers the whole world is the deep and inevitable melancholy of life." [6]

Count Joseph De Maistre, shortly before his death, wrote: "I do not know what the life of scoundrels may be, thank God, I was never one of them; but this much I know that even the life of an honest man is something miserable here below."

99. This is narrated of the Iron Chancellor, Von Bismarck: In 1895 a number of his friends and admirers called on him on the occasion of his jubilee, and presented to him their good wishes. He replied: "Sirs, I must confess that in my long life, now approaching the end, I did not enjoy twenty-four hours of happiness. The greatest pleasure I experienced was when, in my young days, I caught my first hare." We obviously prefer the answer of the great Napoleon when asked what was the happiest day of his life, the one that afforded him genuine, substantial joy. Still inspired in his advanced age by Christian faith, he replied: "The happiest day of my life was that of my first Communion."

We may then rightly conclude, no mortal can ever experience complete happiness in the present life.

[4] Eccles. ii. 10, 11. [5] Vol. vii. p. 393. [6] Vol. viii. p. 322.

CHAPTER VIII

TRUE, PERFECT, LASTING HAPPINESS IS OBTAINED ONLY IN THE BETTER LIFE OF THE FUTURE WORLD

100. As pointed out above (n. 66), goodness led God to create rational beings; and that same goodness willed and decreed that those beings should be happy. Hence happiness is inseparable from man's true end. The practice of virtue itself cannot bring with it perfect happiness. God in His wisdom disposed that virtue should merit happiness, but not enjoy it, at least in the present life. As the proverb has it, "A good conscience is the best of pillows," it is true, and a source of greater happiness than the world can offer, but it is not the happiness of realization of an end finally attained. Rather it is the quiet confidence of the traveler who is assured that he is on the right road to his destination.

101. As it has been proved in a preceding chapter, man is destined by God, his Creator, to perfect happiness. Now, since such happiness cannot be found on earth, there must be reserved for him, beyond the grave, another life, another world, where all his hopes will be realized, and all his cravings fully gratified. That man's future life shall never end will be fully proved in the third part of this work in the discussion on immortality. There must, then, be after death a new life, nay, an eternal life. For if the power of death were to extend its empire beyond the tomb, no perfect happiness could be enjoyed. Whosoever fears that he must, at some future time, forfeit the goods he possesses, can never enjoy true happiness, and his grief for its loss would, of course, be proportionate to the excellence and greatness of it. At the termination of our brief sojourn on earth, we are not to face the gloomy prospect of annihilation, but we shall find ourselves at the beginning of a new, endless, deathless, perennial existence. Such is the cheering prospect assured to us by God's revelation, approved by the voice of reason and attested by the general consent of mankind, as will be shown further on.

102. Our preceding considerations have gradually and logically led us, step by step, to the following affirmations, each duly established in its proper place:

I. That man has been created with an irresistible tendency to happiness.

II. That the happiness he aspires to is perfect, full, and ever-enduring happiness.

III. That such happiness can be realized and secured only in the life to come.

IV. That the only being, whose future possession can make man perfectly and eternally happy, is God Himself, infinite, everlasting good.

V. That God having made us for himself, our happiness and blessedness cannot possibly be found in creatures, however exalted, but must be sought in Him alone.

103. Here we may further ask, in what will the happiness resulting from the possession of God consist?

As we have already pointed out, a full answer to this question can be given only by divine revelation, as the determination of the nature and character of heavenly bliss depends entirely on God's will. This will He has made known to men through the inspired sacred writers and is contained in the deposit of faith preserved in its integrity and expounded by the infallible voice of God's Church. An extended statement of this matter is given in the second and fourth parts of our work.

104. Supposing, then, the fact of such explicit revelation, we shall find it interesting to see the full accord of the promptings of human reason with the oracles of revealed faith. It is scarcely necessary to remark that when it is a question of determining with certainty the very essence of man's future happiness in the present order of Providence, natural reason, nay, the sublimest flights of man's intellect are utterly incompetent guides. Virgil, the representative of reason, could lead Dante through hell and purgatory, but it was for Beatrice, the symbol of the supernatural faith, to unfold the beauties and marvels of heaven.

105. As the angelic doctor, St. Thomas, teaches in the introduction to his masterpiece, the *Summa Theologica,* philosophy, that is, the science of human reason, deals with those things which are knowable by the light of our natural faculties; whilst theology is the science that treats of those things which are chiefly known by the light of divine revelation. In Catholic philosophy, then, the natural light of reason investigates the highest principles naturally known. In Catholic theology the supernatural light of faith studies the truths supernaturally revealed. But human reason, illumined by faith, can attain a deeper and surer knowledge of the objects of its own sphere and understand the connection, which revealed truths have with one another and with the final destiny of man.

106. Any one fairly acquainted with the character of modern speculation in the vast field of religion, must be convinced of the fact that the rationalistic tendency so prevalent in our days is, of its very nature, subversive of Christianity itself, the divine Religion established by Jesus Christ. For one of the most fundamental teachings of that Religion is that man was raised to the supernatural state, and that therefore man's present destiny, being wholly supernatural, lies beyond and above the scope of nature, and can be attained only by the use of the means that are

wholly supernatural, appointed by the same divine authority that destined man to a supernatural end. There will then be the needed proportion, demanded by reason itself, between the means and the end, for no supernatural end is attainable without the use of supernatural means. Therefore any attempt to substitute the practice of merely natural virtues for a life of supernatural faith is doomed to utter failure, as would be the attempt to cross the Pacific Ocean in a frail craft. Let us now see the perfect harmony between the teachings of God's revelation on man's destiny and the dictates of man's reason, particularly when illumined by the light of Christian faith.

107. Human reason is evidently finite in its nature; yet its capacity for knowledge is practically boundless. It can know all that can be known; for its proper object is not only this or that determined, special being, but also being in general. In short, all that possesses some kind of existence and truth falls under the domain of its knowledge. Moreover, our reason is endowed with an inherent tendency to reach the full possession of truth, for in truth alone it finds its complete rest. In other words, it remains fully satisfied only when reaching the Being that contains infinite truth. Such a Being can be no other but God, the first truth and fountain-head of all other truths. When possessing it reason attains the ultimate limit of its activity, the perfect knowledge of its Maker, which completely fills the measure of its capacity.

108. What has been said of man's intelligence must likewise be said of man's will, which aspires not only to this or that particular good, but to good in general; there is no good which it cannot love, and whose possession it cannot desire. Therefore, man's will shall have reached the final object of its aspirations and activity only when in full possession of the center and source of all goods. But the plenitude of goodness is verified in God alone; therefore, only the full and permanent possession of God shall completely satisfy man's will and render him perfectly happy. We conclude this chapter with the words of a man who became as illustrious by the holiness of his life as he was distinguished by the loftiness of his genius, the holy doctor St. Augustine. In response to the natural craving for happiness, he first strove to find it in earthly gratifications, in the pursuit of honor, glory, and worldly renown; but he there sought it in vain. Moved by divine grace, like the prodigal son of the Gospel, he directed his steps toward his heavenly Father's Home. Then, full of true substantial joy, he exclaimed: "O Lord, Thou hast created me for Thee, and my heart can find no peace, no happiness, except in Thee."

109. When we reflect on the bright, lofty destiny that awaits us in the life to come, our faith nearly wavers, as such a prospect seems altogether too good to be true. But what is our warrant

for our expectation of such happiness? Is it not the solemn assurance, the very word of Him who died to purchase for us such untold bliss? "Be glad and rejoice," says Jesus Christ in His Gospel, "for your reward is very great in heaven."[1] Hence we know with absolute certainty that we have been created and redeemed for the eternal possession and enjoyment of God Himself, who, thousands of years ago, thus spoke to Abram, the father of all believers: "Fear not, Abram, I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great."[2]

God's omnipotence made us from nothing; His infinite wisdom proposed to us an end, as a definite purpose of our earthly existence; His boundless goodness and providence supply us in abundance with all the necessary faculties, conditions and means for securing that end. Hence, as divine faith teaches and reason confirms, there exists a Being really and truly productive of perfect happiness, and that is God Himself, and the attainment of that happiness has been placed well within the reach of every man.

110. Happiness, then, consists in reaching our last end, which includes the gratification of all our rational desires. We seek to be always, permanently, supremely, and eternally happy; and this ardent wish God alone, supreme, everlasting good, can and will entirely fulfil.

The capacity of both intellect and will in man are so vast, so comprehensive, that it is absolutely impossible for earthly goods to satisfy them. In fact, all that man can know and will in this world, compared to what he will know and possess in the next, is less than a grain of sand compared to a mountain, or a drop of water compared to an ocean.

111. But how is it that, notwithstanding the bright prospects held out to us by Christian faith, so many are found sad, miserable, and discontented? It is because they seek happiness where happiness does not exist. As the Gospel tells us: "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?"[3] Some fancy that happiness is to be sought in pleasures and amusements, in the indulgence of the senses, in every species of comfort and refinements. Such individuals, far from having overtaken happiness, have, on the contrary, driven it farther and farther from their reach. They will sooner or later discover that they have blasted and deadened their senses, clouded their intellect, and dulled their mental faculties by excessive indulgence. With their hearts filled with sorrow, regrets, and gnawing remorse, too cowardly to retrace their steps by true repentance, they go down to their grave diseased, dishonored, and victims of black despair. Surely he entirely forgets his high dignity and noble estate who stoops to slake the insatiable thirst for happiness in the muddy, dirty waters of sinful gratifications.

[1] Matt. v. 12. [2] Genes. xv. 1. [3] Matt vii 16.

The essential distinctions between the goods of this life and those of the next are chiefly two. The first is given by St. Paul: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."[4]

The second distinction consists in this, that, whilst earthly goods can never fully satisfy us, the heavenly ones do. And this is precisely what our Blessed Saviour meant when He thus spoke to the Samaritan woman: "Whosoever drinketh of this water [that of Jacob's well drunk by the cattle as well as by men] shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever; but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting."[5]

Here some one might ask: How are we to reconcile Christ's words just cited from the Gospel with those of the inspired author of Ecclesiasticus, which seem to convey a contradictory idea. Divine Wisdom says: "They that eat me, shall yet hunger; and they that drink me, shall yet thirst."[6] There can be, of course, no contradiction in God's word whether announced by God's inspired writer in the Old Testament, or proclaimed by God's own Son in the New. Both texts evidently refer to the bliss of the next life. Our Blessed Saviour by referring to the two kinds of water, that of Jacob's well and His own, meant to impress this great truth, that whosoever would drink the water springing up into life everlasting, and thereby reach the bliss of the beatific vision, would be perfectly satisfied with the joys of heaven, and will no longer thirst for those of earth.

The words of Ecclesiasticus evidently refer likewise to the delights caused by the beatific vision; and the blessed that will enjoy it "shall yet thirst" in this sense, that, as the Abbot St. Bernard explains, the elect will be so gladdened by the sight of God as always to desire to continue to enjoy it: for instead of producing in them satiety and surfeit, as it is done by earthly goods, it will excite in them perpetually a new desire of seeing Him and enjoying Him.

112.

"True happiness is not the growth of earth,
The soil is fruitless, if you seek it there,
'Tis an erotic of celestial birth,
And never blossoms but in celestial air.
Sweet plant of Paradise! Its seeds are sown
In here and there, a breast of heavenly mould.
It rises slow, and buds, but ne'er was known
To blossom here—the climate is too cold."

—R. B. Sheridan.

[4] 2 Corinth. iv. 18. [5] John iv. 13, 14. [6] Eccles. xxiv. 29.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHIEF SCOPE OF OUR EARTHLY PILGRIMAGE

113. More than three thousand and six hundred years ago our sojourn here below was called a pilgrimage by the holy patriarch Jacob, when to King Pharao, who had asked him his age, he gave this answer: "The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years few and evil."[1] An expression which evidently implies the thought of a final goal to be reached at the end of the pilgrim's journey. Hence St. Paul writes: "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come."[2]

Our life journey, then, upon earth is a period of probation or preparation for a future one. In other words, time is for eternity. A perfect happiness awaits us beyond the grave, an everlasting abode, where man's soul will enjoy tranquil possession of all goods, perfect gladness, and unruffled peace. The cheering promise of the inspired writer will then be fulfilled. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[3]

114. We come now to a most pertinent practical inquiry, and it is this: What should man do to secure that perfectly happy eternal life? What is the mighty task which he is expected to accomplish during his brief pilgrimage on earth? Nearly twenty centuries ago this identical question was put by an earnest inquirer to the world's Saviour, God's incarnate Son, on the plains of Palestine. Both that question and its answer we possess to-day in the pages of the Gospel:

"Behold one came and said to Him: Good Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting? Who said to Him: If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."[4]

115. It seems that we could scarcely be blamed if, supported, as we are, by the authority of the Divine Master, who gave that answer, we should close this chapter by simply requesting our readers frequently to recall that momentous question and conform their conduct to its answer. But a few additional reflections will not be out of place, as they may induce some spiritually negligent readers to give more than a passing thought to truths, on the knowledge and practice of which their eternal happiness depends. It is highly important for us to remember that Almighty God, as a most wise and benevolent Father, besides preparing for His children a happy home with Him and His angels in heaven, has also provided for the welfare of His numerous family upon earth.

[1] Gen. xlvii. 9. [2] Heb. xiii. 14. [3] Apoc. xxi. 4. [4] Matt. xix. 16, 17.

Now what is it that constitutes the very essence of the well-being of society in general and of its individual members in particular? It is the carrying out into practice the short, pithy injunction laid down by the Lord through His royal prophet: "Decline from evil and do good."[5] The pursuit of virtue and the shunning of vice, the cultivation of justice and the hatred of iniquity, such are the constituent elements of all true happiness, both of individuals and of nations. In this connection we may here appropriately quote the words of the distinguished convert, Orestes Brownson: "What, then, is true national greatness? We answer, that nation is greatest in which man may most easily and effectually follow the true and proper end of man. The nation is in the people. Its greatness must, then, be in the greatness of the people. The people are a collection or aggregation of individuals. Consequently the greatness of a nation is the greatness of the individuals that compose it. The question of national greatness resolves itself, therefore, into the question of individual greatness. The greatness of the individual consists in his fulfilling the great end of his existence, the end for which Almighty God made him and placed him here. Hence no man is truly great who neglects life's great end."[6]

116. Therefore, in the eyes of God, in accordance with the principles of revealed Faith and the dictates of sound reason itself, what constitutes man's true greatness in any sphere of knowledge, in any branch of science, in any social position or professional career, is not worldly or any temporal achievement, but the conscientious discharge of his duties to God, to himself, and to his fellow-men. As we read in Ecclesiastes: "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is all man."[7] And the same divine authority teaches us the same truth regarding the nations. It is not the extent of their domains, the multitude of their subjects, colossal wealth, their world-wide commercial transactions, a mighty army and a powerful navy, that form their true greatness, but justice in their dealings with men at home, and other people abroad; a legislation inspired by and based on Christian principles, the abolition of public acts and practices against Christian morality. This is the truth conveyed to us by that striking passage of Holy Writ: "Justice exalteth a nation; but sin maketh nations miserable."[8]

Obviously what the sacred writer says of a whole nation can be applied to its individual members. Abolish virtue, remove all restraint from sin, and you at once put an end to all peace, tranquillity, order, and happiness of men here and hereafter.

117. But on the contrary, so long as the divine precept of shunning evil and doing good is acted upon by civil societies and their members, order, prosperity, and happiness are secured.

[5] Ps. xxxvi. 27. [6] National Greatness, vol. xv. p. 525. [7] Eccles. xii. 13. [8] Prov. xiv. 34.

Moreover, whilst a life of order, integrity, and virtue prepares and fits man for his happy destiny in the world to come, it never fails to obtain for him, at the same time, the highest degree of happiness possible in this. Of the Catholic Church, divinely authorized to enforce God's command of avoiding evil and doing good, it has been said that while she seems exclusively engaged in preparing men for the happiness of heaven, she fosters in the highest degree the attainment of their happiness upon earth. Plato wrote: "If a state is governed by men, who trample upon justice, it has no means of security."[9] But a far greater authority, that of the inspired prophet, says: "The nation and the kingdom that will not serve Thee, O Lord, shall perish."[10]

And what is the lesson of history in this regard? Professor Rawlinson, the distinguished author of "Ancient Monarchies," Schlegel in his "Philosophy of History," and even the infidel Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," are fully agreed in attributing the gradual decadence and total ruin of ancient nations to idolatry and moral corruption. St. Augustine, in his famous book, *De Civitate Dei*, and Bossuet in his able "Essay on Universal History," thoroughly discuss this question and draw the same conclusion.

118. It cannot, then, be said that God grants to men their earthly life for this object only, that during it they may have nothing else to do but wait for forthcoming eternity. This is an impossible supposition directly contrary to divine wisdom and justice. Hence God has assigned to all rational creatures the laborious task of earnest preparation for the life eternal, which awaits them beyond the grave. This is the purpose proposed to all human creatures, to every individual of the human race, to the monarch on the throne, as well as to his lowest subject.

The final direction of man's acts, as human acts, so that they shall conform to God's standard of right and wrong, rests ultimately on the individual himself. When the moral life is concerned, he and he alone must take control; he cannot delegate his task to others. Therefore, if he would voyage without shipwreck into eternity, he cannot, except at his peril, neglect the knowledge of his true destiny.

119. Men may be poor and weary with work; they may live in the slums and often have insufficient to eat; they may be among the outcasts and beggars of this miserable world. Does that matter, if they are nevertheless reckoned among God's darlings, destined to the inconceivable, captivating delights of the heavenly kingdom? They may be robbed of all their rights, but no one can rob them of their heavenly inheritance except themselves. When we look at an ill-clad, impecunious laboring man, begrimed with dirt and weary with toil, it may be difficult to realize the fact that he is in very truth an adopted child of God, with all

[9] De Leg. vol. viii. [10] Is. lx. 12.

the rights and privileges of a son, earned and secured to him by the passion and death of his Redeemer; and that one day, if he does not throw away his chances by sin and disobedience, he will be actually received into the palace of the Lord of the universe, to enjoy the happiness of which St. Paul says: "That eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart conceived what God has prepared for those that love Him." [11]

120. Man is essentially free, and must, conformably to his nature, freely tend to the attainment of his last end. Irrational beings are led to their end by an intrinsic necessity, by blind instinct and irresistible forces. Unable to recognize and worship their Creator they are incapable of merit or demerit; hence their existence ends here. It cannot be so with man, for, endowed as he is with liberty, he can freely direct the acts of his intellect and will, in fact, all his deliberate operations to the knowledge, service, and love of his Maker, and thus merit the possession of heavenly bliss, the final scope of his earthly existence. It is, therefore, not a matter of indifference for man to live in this or that fashion, for not every kind of life brings him to his last end. Holy Writ warns us against a possible fatal illusion on this head: "There is a way which seemeth just to man: but the ends thereof lead to death." [12] Here we are also reminded by Christ Himself of the two ways, one broad and the other narrow, of which one leads to perdition, the other to life eternal. "Enter ye at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and strait the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it." [13]

To avoid such fatal shipwreck we must firmly adhere to the guidance of Him who said in His Gospel: "I am the way and the truth, and the life." [14] As if He said to each one of us: "I am the way by My examples, the truth by My teachings and the life by My grace."

121. Lastly, it is not becoming God's wisdom and justice to allow His rational creatures to treat life eternal as an object of little or no value, as if it could be obtained without any effort or co-operation on their part. On the contrary, divine wisdom and justice demanded that it should be promised to man as a crown of successful conflicts, as the reward of his loyalty and submission to the most wise and just commands of His Sovereign Lord and Supreme Benefactor. By so doing God, whilst respecting in man the freedom granted to him, richly recompenses the spontaneous homage of his heart. The Lord, then, has decreed that perfect happiness in the world to come shall be bestowed on condition of man's doing God's will in this.

[11] 1 Cor. ii. 9. *See also* Is. lxiv. 4.
[12] Prov. xiv. 12.
[13] Matt. vii. 13, 14.
[14] John xiv, 6.

CHAPTER X

THE RIGHT WAY TO ETERNAL HAPPINESS

122. It has been shown that Almighty God requires that man should, in the present world, prepare himself for the eternal life and happiness which await him in the future. It has also been pointed out in a general way that this preparation essentially consists in conforming his moral conduct to the will of his Maker; a will manifested to him by the light of reason and the far brighter light of divine revelation. That this is a stern, undeniable obligation, binding all men, no one can deny. Yet how many, alas, neglect it altogether! What a contrast do we see between man's conduct and the examples of the Saviour of the world proposed to all mankind as their model: "And a voice came out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him."[1]

123. As Cardinal Newman writes: "If there was one amongst the sons of men who might allowably have taken his pleasure and have done his own will here below, surely it was He who came down on earth from the bosom of the Father and who was so pure and spotless in the human nature which He put on Him, that he could have no human purpose or aim inconsistent with the will of His Father; yet the Son of God, the Eternal Word, came not to do His own will, but His who sent Him. Hence in His agony He cried out: 'Not my will but Thine be done.'"[2] After such an example what excuse can sinners allege to justify or palliate their resistance to God's will by the transgression of His commands?

A detailed answer to the question, what kind of preparation is needed to secure man's magnificent destiny, will be given in the two last chapters of this first part of our work. At present we confine our readers' attention to such leading principles as will contribute to our purpose.

124. The whole duty of man regarding his supernatural destiny may be summed up in this brief statement: Man must fit and prepare himself for life eternal by serving God, his Creator and Supreme Benefactor, by accomplishing His holy will; in short, by living a holy, virtuous life. We say a holy, virtuous life, for no homage, no worship can be pleasing to God, and be therefore available for salvation which is not accompanied by a tenor of life comformable to the divine commands; a condition clearly expressed by the world's Redeemer, who says in His Gospel: "You are My friends, if you do the things that I command you."[3]

[1] Luke ix. 35. [2] Luke xxii. 42. [3] John xv. 14.

125. This preparation for eternal life, which God exacts from every rational creature enjoying the use of reason, must, of course, be something placed within the reach of his ability. Now what is it that is always in the power of man? Evidently the right use of the freedom of his will, the fulfilment of God's will, in short, a virtuous, upright life, a moral conduct in harmony with the divine law. All external goods, such as an exalted social position, honor, reputation, wealth, etc., may be lost against our will, and it may not be possible for us to regain them. And as to other goods of the body and of the soul, such as health, corporal vigor and strength, keen intelligence, the acquisition of science, and the mastery of this or that art, they are often placed beyond our reach. Virtue alone, the keeping of God's commands, is always and everywhere in our power, because it depends on our own free will. Hence in it alone consists the preparation for heaven, which God demands of His rational creatures. Therefore the legitimate use of man's liberty consists in so directing his operations as will fit him for the attainment of his supernatural end.

126. This way of acting agrees perfectly with the following excellent definition of human liberty given by a French author, whose name I was unable to trace:

"*Etre libre, c'est faire ce qu'on veut, en faisant ce qu'on doit.*"—"To be free is to do what one wills, whilst doing what one ought to do."

The possibility for man to keep God's holy law, with the help of divine grace promised and given to all in answer to prayer, is a very old truth, of which the prophet Moses reminded his people by the following encouraging language: "This commandment, that I (the Lord thy God) command thee this day, is not above thee, nor far off from thee. But the word is very very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it."[4]

127. For the reason alleged above, we cannot here describe in detail all that a virtuous life implies. It is enough, however, to recall the universally admitted fact that all men enjoying the normal function of their intellectual faculties know the distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong: consequently between an orderly and a disorderly life. Guided by this criterium they divide human creatures into two large classes, the good and the bad, the just and the wicked. Though in some particular cases there might be some difference as to the practical application of moral principles, yet all are agreed in distinguishing the good from the bad, the virtuous from the vicious. All men then admit two kinds of morality, two ways of life, the way of virtue and the way of vice, the life of the just

[4] Deut. xxx. 11, 14.

and that of sinners. In other words, they know full well the distinction between the observance and the transgression of God's holy law.[5]

128. If we ask the reason why men, whether civilized or barbarous, are quite correct in making the distinction pointed out above, we find that it lies in the fact that the Ten Commandments given to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, are but the external expression of the natural law, a reflection of the eternal wisdom, which the Sovereign Creator has engraved upon the souls of men, and which their conscience practically applies. Reproducing the lucid doctrine of Aquinas, St. Alphonsus Liguori writes as follows: "There is a twofold rule governing human actions, one remote and the other proximate. The remote or material rule is the law of God; the proximate personal rule is the conscience of man. For although conscience must conform itself in all things to the law of God, the goodness and badness of human actions are known to us only in so far as conscience takes cognizance of them." [6]

129. Here we ask what is the kind of life which should be looked upon as the preparation which God requires of man in order to crown him with the reward of endless happiness? The answer is not far to seek. As will be shown farther on by apposite testimonies, the universal sentiment of mankind is that virtue alone, the observance of God's law, submission to His holy will, furnishes a sure guarantee of final recompense. Man, at the termination of his earthly life, will find that the essential distinction between good and evil, a distinction which he could not ignore, will be inevitably acted upon. Virtue will infallibly receive its reward; and sin will with equal certainty meet with its punishment. This will be the irrevocable verdict to be pronounced by the Supreme Judge, from whose piercing eye nothing can be hidden, and from whose sentence there will be no appeal.

130. But the traditional, universal belief of a forthcoming judgment was to receive a far more precise expression from the Christian revelation, which proclaims to men the salutary doctrine of the two judgments to come; the particular held for each departed soul immediately after death, and the general on the last day for all mankind.

The former is that announced by St. Paul: "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." [7]

Immediately after death, as the soul appears at God's judgment-seat in the full, untrammeled exercise of its faculties, memory, intellect, and will, it is forced to acknowledge to itself that in all its earthly life, it never did evil in thought, word, or deed

[5] See Catholic Moral Teachings and Its Advantages, by Joseph Mansbach, New York, 1914, p. 131. ch. "The Law of God and Conscience."

[6] Theol. Mor i, I.

[7] Heb. ix. 27.

but it might have refrained from doing it, and might have done good instead. It will therefore confess that every act of evil was a free act, an irrational and immoral abuse of liberty. When the soul is summoned by death to God's judgment, though it does not see the person of the Judge, yet it feels the presence and action of an extraordinary power, the power of Divine Omnipotence, whose sentence is to decide, irrevocably, the soul's eternal destination according to Holy Writ: "It is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways."[8] The judgment is instantaneous and the final verdict is made known to the souls that, recognizing the justice of the sentence, whatever it be, will be compelled to repeat David's words: "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right."[9]

131. The truth of the doctrine we have just stated concerning man's accountability to the Divine Judge and the consequent retribution according to the character of his earthly deeds, whether good or evil, is guaranteed by God's goodness, justice, and holiness. As reason tells us, whoever intends to reach some particular end must employ the means leading to it. God has placed man upon this earth that he might serve and glorify Him. Now such a purpose cannot be effected by a sinful life, by rebellion against Him, by a conduct that will mar, disfigure, or even utterly efface God's image from his soul. It is therefore God's will that man should abandon the broad way of iniquity and pursue the narrow path of virtue. The Archangel Raphael uttered a great truth when he said to holy Tobias and his son: "Alms maketh to find mercy and life everlasting. But they that commit sin and iniquity, are enemies to their own soul."[10]

132. God's wisdom and omnipotence have ordered and disposed all things in measure and number and weight.[11] Shall man be the only exception? Shall he alone remain lawless and purposeless in this world? All creatures are under the reign of law? Shall man alone have no order to keep, no ordinance to follow? Such a thing would be directly contrary to the wisdom and sanctity of God. Now the order man is subject to consists in his submission to the divine will, which can be accomplished only by a holy, virtuous life. God, therefore, exacts from man that he should freely pursue a life of virtue and thus merit the promised crown of everlasting bliss.

[8] Ecclus. xi. 28.
[9] Ps. cxviii. 137.
[10] Tob. xii. 9, 10; Psal. x. 6.
[11] Wis. xi. 21.

CHAPTER XI

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE REVELATION ON THE LAST, SUPERNATURAL END OF MAN

133. We must preface this chapter with two brief remarks. In the first place, we freely admit that, abstracting from the fact that man has been raised to the supernatural state, we could, by reason alone, prove that God would provide for man's purely natural state an object capable of satisfying all our natural aspirations and desires. But our elevation to the supernatural state is a cheering event, which it is impossible to deny. (See D. Palmieri and Cardinal Mazzella, "De Deo Creante," where they treat of the possibility of man's purely natural state in another order of Providence. See also Ad. Tanquery in his "Brevior Synopsis," p. 312.)

Now to tell what that new supernal order or state implies, in other words, to determine in what man's present happiness in the next world will precisely consist, we must consult the oracles of divine revelation, and this for the best of reasons. The special nature or essence of that happiness and of the several enjoyments of the soul after death, and of the body after its resurrection, evidently depends on the decrees of God's will. Therefore, the information must come from Himself, and we possess it in the special announcement, which He vouchsafed to make to mankind in this regard.

Secondly, at this point of our investigations we simply state in general the essential constituents of heavenly, supernatural happiness; for a detailed account of that bliss will be appropriately considered in the fourth part of our book in the chapters treating of the remunerative sanction of both soul and body, according to the teachings of revealed faith.

The root evil of human life is the attributing of a false value to this present world. This is fully repaired by the teachings of divine faith in a real hereafter, which enables us to look at this life in its true light as a passage to the next, where all accounts will be evenly balanced, and justice shall be done to all human beings according to their deeds.

134. This teaching or doctrine is embodied in Holy Scripture and tradition, preserved in their substantial integrity and infallibly interpreted by the Catholic Church; a truth demonstrated in numberless apologetic and theological works, written in every language spoken by man, and placed within the reach of all who care to consult them.

The Vatican Council, held in Rome in the year 1870, speaks thus: "It must be said that supernatural revelation was abso-

lutely necessary, since God, through His infinite goodness, decreed to destine man to a supernatural end; that is, to a participation of divine goods, surpassing entirely the natural strength of the human mind; for as both a prophet and an apostle assure us: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart conceived what God has prepared for those that love Him.' "[1]

Besides the authoritative pronouncement of the Vatican Council, we possess other explicit, infallible definitions on the subject at issue.

The Supreme Pontiff, Benedict XII (A. D. 1336) speaks thus: "With this Constitution with apostolic authority we define that the blessed, even before resuming their bodies, and before the general judgment, see the Divine Essence by an intuitive vision and face to face. By virtue of this vision and fruition of the Divine Essence, the theological virtues of faith and hope will totally cease; and this vision and fruition shall continue without any interruption till the final judgment and after it for all eternity."[2]

The Council of Florence (A. D. 1439) defined the same truth as follows: "The souls of those who, after baptism, did not incur any spot of sin, and of those who, after committing sin, were purified in life and by purgatorial pains, are immediately received in heaven, and there they clearly behold God, as He is, one and triune with a perfection proportionate to each one's merits."[3]

135. The preceding authoritative documents teach us that the essential beatitude of heaven consists in the intuitive vision or sight of God. The blessed saints and angels are enabled to partake of this vision by means of the light of glory, which, as the renowned theologian Leonard Lessius explains, is a supreme irradiation and participation of that light, by which God sees Himself, and by which the Creature's intelligence is raised to a divine state, and becomes, so to speak, godlike. The primary object of the beatific vision, (happy-making sight) is God Himself and whatever is formally contained in Him; namely, the divine essence and attributes and the Three Divine Persons, as is fully explained in Part IV.

136. The secondary object of the beatific vision, as theologians tell us, is what is contained in God *eminenter;* that is, in a most perfect manner, namely, the wonders of creation, so imperfectly known in this world, even by the most learned scientists.

The accidental beatitude of heaven will be derived principally from the reunion of the blessed soul to the risen glorified body. Hence the happiness of the elect, after the last resurrection, will be increased both extensively and intensively; extensively, inas-

[1] Is. lxiv. 4; 1 Cor. ii. 9; D. Enchiridion, p. 474.
[2] D. Enchiridion, p. 216. [3] Ibid., p. 236.

much as it will be shared by the body as well as by the soul; intensively, because the glorification of the body will redound to the greater delight of the soul.

137. What we have just stated clearly shows that our Divine Lord, through an act of infinite liberality and munificence truly worthy of Him, has destined us to a far higher happiness than we could ever claim, a participation of a beatitude that immensely surpasses our natural capacity, as well as that of any creature which He might bring into existence.

Our Blessed Redeemer, through His passion and death, restored to us the right to the heavenly inheritance and the beatific vision, and merited for us all the means of grace necessary for the attainment of our supernatural end. Having accomplished the work of redemption, He returned to His heavenly Father to prepare a place for the children of redeemed humanity. This much is contained in His joyful promise recorded in St. John's Gospel: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and will take you to Myself; that where I am, you also may be."[4]

But before ascending into heaven, Christ transferred and entrusted His divine mission to the Church He founded, charging her with the task of announcing to men His doctrine and of applying to them the merits of redemption through the channels of grace, the sacraments He had instituted, thus leading them to the attainment of their last, supernatural end, everlasting bliss.

138. To borrow the words of Father Peter Finlay in his recent book, "The Church of Christ," some may ask: "But will the Catholic Church be always faithful to her mission? Will she carry out the purpose of her Founder? Will she, above all, continue to hold and to teach unerringly the dogmatic and moral truths which He revealed, and on which Christianity, its faith, its moral life, its embodiment in a visible society depend?" We answer: Our surest guarantee and pledge is Christ's solemn promise made to the visible Head of the Church, His first Vicar and representative, St. Peter: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[5] Then addressing all His apostles, the first teaching members of His Church, and, in their persons, their future legitimate successors, He said: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[6] "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay."[7]

Christ's Church being then infallible in what she holds and teaches as divinely revealed, and as we can recognize with cer-

[4] John xiv. 1, 2, 3 [5] Matt. xvi. 18. [6] Matt. xxviii. 20.
[7] Luke xxi. 15.

tainty among existing religious bodies, the true Church of Christ, then all difficulties of belief are at an end, or, at any rate, easily solved. This subject will be fully developed farther on.

CHAPTER XII

THE ONLY IMPEDIMENT TO MAN'S ATTAINMENT OF HIS LAST END

139. The heavenly appointed Teacher of divine truth, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who came upon earth to deliver to men the message of salvation, in His Sermon on the Mount proclaimed to the whole world, for all ages to come, the necessary and absolutely indispensable means or condition for securing eternal happiness in the following clear terms: "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."[1]

140. The natural law engraved on man's mind, the positive divine law expressed in the Ten Commandments, the teachings of God's Church, tell us in the clearest language in what the divine will consists. From this fundamental principle naturally follows this consequence. As only one thing is absolutely necessary for man to obtain his last happy end, eternal life, and that is the fulfilment of God's will by the observance of the divine commandments, so only one thing can prevent him from reaching that end, and that is the resistance, rebellion to the divine will by the transgression of those commandments, by the commission of grievous, mortal sin, which separates the sinner from God and makes him His enemy.

141. The modern so-called ethical school does not speak of sin. Christian Scientists, so-called, have abolished its name and even denied its very existence; hence any talk on this subject is tabooed. The proud man, who makes an idol of himself, hates to admit any guilt in his conduct. He resembles the haughty Pharisee of old, who, instead of imploring from God mercy and forgiveness for his own sins, thanks the Lord for not being like all other people, full of iniquity, adulterers, extortioners, and thieves. Can these voluntary aberrations save men from incurring the consequences of unforgiven sin?

142. To disabuse sinners of such fatal misconception, we need but remind them of the divine warnings registered in Holy Writ. St. Paul, speaking of the inveterate sinner who offers an obstinate resistance to the spirit of God, says: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."[2] "The death of the

[1] Matt. vii. 21; Luke vi. 46, 49. [2] Heb. x. 31.

wicked is very evil," writes the Royal Prophet.[3] And the words of the Archangel Raphael to holy Tobias remind us of the same salutary truth. "They that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul."[4] So it is indeed. For by the commission of sin men run the awful risk of being overtaken by death in that fatal state, and thus incurring the irretrievable damnation of their souls; the awful evil, which neither the power of all the devils in hell, nor the malice of all the wicked men of earth would be able to inflict upon him.

"If a man seek not Jesus, he does himself more harm than the whole world and all his enemies can do to him."[5]

The transgression of the divine law, then, renders the rational creature guilty of the divine offense, and therefore amenable to punishment, which may be at once incurred by the sinner's death in that state.

Sin has been rightly defined by St. Augustine as a word, thought, desire, and an act contrary to the law of God. As moralists teach us, three conditions must concur to make rational, responsible beings, such as we are, guilty of a mortal sin, and consequently amenable to endless punishment. They are a clear knowledge of the mind, full deliberation of the will, and grievous matter. If any of these three conditions is wanting, the sin may be only venial, or there may be no sin at all.

143. To all mortals that depart from this life with the canker of grievous sin on their soul, the Supreme Judge will say: "Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity."[6] "Know you not," writes St. Paul, "that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God? Do not err; neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liers with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God."[7] St. John, the author of the Apocalypse, thus writes of the several sinners excluded from God's kingdom and consigned to damnation: "Without are dogs and sorcerers and unchaste, and murderers, and servers of idols, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie."[8]

144. This last text reminds me of an incident recorded by Msgr. Vaughan in his excellent volume, "Faith and Folly," which shows to what depth of depravity some human individuals may sink:

"In a letter to the *Westminster Gazette,* Sept. 1, 1900, one Elizabeth L. Banks writes:

" 'Sir, I have seen immortality in my dog's eyes, my faithful friend for thirteen years, now dead; yet over whose grave I have planted the inscription: "*Not* dead, but *gone before.*" As

[3] Ps. xxxiii. 22.
[4] Tob. xii. 10.
[5] Imitation of Christ, Book 2, Chap. 7.
[6] Luke xiii. 27.
[7] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.
[8] Apoc. xxii. 15.

for Revelation [Apocalypse XXII, 15, just cited] so often glibly quoted, all I have to say is, that if it is true, then may it be granted unto me to have lived in such a way that I may also be one of the despised withouts, so that I may have the company of my dog.'

"This Miss (or Mrs.) Banks expresses her preference to be outside of heaven with her dog than inside with God and His angels and saints, and intends to lead such a life as to deserve that lot. Comment is useless, and here anger gives place to pity."

145. St. Paul, writing on the same momentous truth, the gravity of sin and its terrible consequences, thus warns the Galatians: "Brethren, be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." [9]

146. We are fully aware of the fact that modern unbelievers, some so-called Evangelical ministers of the late Pastor Russell's stamp, and not a few wavering Christians, raise objections against the eternity of hell, and even against its very existence. Such difficulties need not detain us here, for full justice will be done to them later on in the Seventh and Eighth Parts of this work, when we shall treat of the punitive sanction in the world to come.

147. As a motive of encouragement to perseverance in hatred of sin, and in the fear of the Lord, let us here briefly recall some striking examples of heroism and loyalty to God exhibited by the saints and the martyrs, both before and after the Christian era. Their resolution, faithfully carried out, even under the most enticing allurements or in the face of terrific tortures, was to die rather than to sin. Thus to the lustful Egyptian temptress chaste Joseph replied: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" [10] The chaste Susanna, determined to face death and an atrocious calumny rather than to consent to the iniquitous proposal of the two voluptuous elders, exclaimed: "It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it [this evil] than to sin in the sight of the Lord." [11]

The nonagenarian Eleazar preferred to undergo a martyr's death rather than transgress the Mosaic Law, and, as he was about to be executed, he said: If I sinned, "I should not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead." The sacred writer concludes this narrative as follows: "Thus did this man die, leaving not only to young men, but also to the whole nation, the memory of his death for an example of virtue and fortitude." [12]

But in the whole history of the Old Testament nothing is

[9] Gal. vi. 7, 8. [10] Gen. xxxix. 9. [11] Dan. xiii. 23 [12] 2 Mach. vi. 26, 31.

found more sublime, more touching and inspiring, than the courage displayed by the seven Machabees brothers and their heroic mother in the excruciating martyrdom which they suffered under the cruel king Antiochus, when, rather than transgress the law, they allowed themselves to be chopped to pieces and burned alive.[13]

148. As we shall have occasion to notice further on in Chapters IX and X of Part VII, similar, and, in some cases, even more astonishing acts of heroism were exhibited by the martyrs of the Christian Era, when men and women of every rank of society, true heroes and heroines, as well as young boys and tender maidens, bravely underwent the most atrocious deaths rather than to prove faithless to Christ and His holy Church. And, in comparatively more recent times, what does history tell us about the Catholic Church in England? In the sixteenth century a violent storm passed over that unhappy country, and hell itself seemed to have been let loose. The old religion, which had been the very heart and source of spiritual life in the whole realm, was proscribed, assaulted, and abolished. The noblest heads rolled on the block, and any one who dared call himself a Catholic became thereby guilty of high treason, and was liable to be tortured, disemboweled, and hanged. The savage executioners would cut down the martyrs from the gallows while they were yet writhing in agony, and tear out their still palpitating hearts.

The recollection of such examples of unconquerable fortitude, whilst encouraging God's faithful servants, cannot but make weak-kneed Christians blush for shame, who, at the least breath of temptation, cowardly surrender their soul to Satan, by the commission of sin. Indeed, it must be said that no Christian is worthy of the name he bears who is not ready and willing to suffer all things, and death itself, if it need be, rather than incur the guilt of a grievous offense against the majesty of God.

Would to God that we should be so firmly rooted in the fear and love of the Lord as to be able to repeat St. Paul's bold challenge: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? But in all these things we overcome because of Him that loved us."[14]

Dear reader, it is only by living up to such resolutions that we can, with God's grace, lead a virtuous, holy life and shun sin, the only obstacle to the attainment of our last happy end, the bliss of eternal life.

[13] 2 Mach. vii.

[14] Rom. viii. 35, 37.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PARAMOUNT VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF OUR EARTHLY LIFE

149. The subjects we have dealt with in the preceding chapters enable us, no doubt, fully to realize the overwhelming significance of the present life, when considered as to its bearings on the next. This temporal life takes on a different aspect, indeed, when we become convinced of the reality of the life to come and its untold treasures, placed by a bountiful Providence within our reach. How discouragement vanishes before the consoling assurance that no labor, however hidden to the world's gaze, no faithful discharge of duty, can be in vain. If all this be true, and it undoubtedly is, our earthly pilgrimage, granted for the acquisition of endless happiness in our heavenly country, acquires the highest significance. It tells us that the finite and the transitory is but a prelude to the infinite and the enduring. It is the splendid shining doorway through which sanctified humanity passes at death's summons, into the inner palace of the Deity.

Heaven with all its delights is certainly promised to all, but, as we have seen, only conditionally, for reasons eminently worthy of divine wisdom and justice. God wishes most earnestly to lead all to eternal happiness, our last end, but on condition that we merit it by a virtuous life. God's inspired word, which assures us that "He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,"[1] tells us also that we should with fear and trembling work out our salvation.[2] Hence, if man freely and willingly submits himself to the will of his Creator and Lord, an eternal crown will be his reward. If, on the contrary, by the abuse of his liberty, he refuses to obey, rejects his proffered gifts, and prefers his own will to that of his Maker, he will justly forfeit the promised crown, and instead of singing in heaven for all eternity the praises of God's goodness and mercy, he will, in spite of himself, proclaim His omnipotence and justice forever in the prison of hell. Therefore Almighty God will infallibly obtain the supreme and final purpose of creation, which is His own honor and glory, through the acknowledgment, either spontaneous or compulsory, of His divine attributes; for the words of Holy Scripture must be verified. "God made all things for Himself; the wicked also for the evil day."[3]

150. Man's earthly trial is short; but an eternity hangs on it. Yet, brief as it is, life confronts man with a choice on which

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 4. [2] Philipp. ii. 12. [3] Prov. xvi. 4.

everything depends. To change the current of circumstances about him is beyond his power; but he may set his course as he wills, either directing it upward to eternal bliss, or downward to everlasting woe. There can be no guarantee of perseverance in the good choice without unceasing efforts. Evil grows apace; good plods but slowly. The nettle thrives of itself even when trampled upon, but the rose needs the gardener's care.

Many a mortal is met with in this world who has a wrong conception of man's life, and, alas, acts accordingly. It is said that Democritus was wont to laugh when he thought of it, and that Heraclitus wept. This contrast may be seen in the long flight of ages that make up human history. To the optimist the world appears superlatively good; to the pessimist it is hopelessly evil. As both systems are wrong, we must say that the truth lies midway between these two opposing views. As Christian faith teaches us, this world of ours is neither heaven nor hell; it is a road, difficult, no doubt, but not impassable to human efforts aided by divine grace leading to the eternal optimism of heaven. Bordering on this road lies a dread abyss, the embodiment of pessimism, into which a man may voluntarily fling himself.

151. The Lord's promise registered in the Apocalypse (11, 10), "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life," points out to us all our sublime earthly task in the clearest language. Whoever fails to merit God's remunerative crown will fall into the hands of His punitive justice, the awful lot which the sinner himself freely and deliberately chooses. As it is stated in several parts of this work, the final decision as to the place where eternity is to be spent lies in the power and will of man himself—either eternal happiness or eternal misery, either heaven or hell. Such is the choice which he must make before departing from this world. With the help of divine grace, which is granted to all in answer to prayer, man can become the author and maker of his own everlasting bliss. No one will be reckoned among the elect unless he deserves this lot by his own earnest efforts. On the other hand, no one will be counted among the reprobates unless he brought upon himself that greatest of evils, the loss of celestial bliss. In the light of eternity our temporal life acquires a value and a significance which are truly astounding, nay, overwhelming. Either man chooses the arduous and steep path of virtue, which leads to heavenly happiness, or runs headlong on the broad way of sin, which brings him to perdition, that is, everlasting misery. This is the alternative presented to all by Jesus Christ in His Gospel. Here there is no neutral ground for us to stand upon, for He tells us: "He that is not with Me is against Me."[4] No mortal that has reached the use of reason can evade this dreadful alter-

[4] Matt. xii. 30.

native. Hence, to make a wise, happy choice and thus secure to himself a never-ending abode in God's kingdom, is the first, the supreme, and most important task allotted to man in his short, earthly life. This is what imparts to every minute of our time a sublime gravity, which should deter every man from trifling with his earthly existence and surrendering it to Satan by a career of sin. Crowns and diadems, wealth and learning, high position and renown count but as straws when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. The beggar, the outcast, the street-sweeper, or the meanest underscullion, if only his soul be free from sin and adorned with the beauty of sanctifying grace, will be more esteemed by God, and wear for all eternity a brighter and nobler crown than all the great of this world endowed with inferior virtue and holiness.

152. If a man has to face a trial, on the issue of which his own life depends, he will think of it night and day, and spare no labor or expense to secure a successful result. Yet, what is any earthly trial compared with the divine judgment which is to decide our everlasting lot? Every sensible man will continually hold before his mind the thought of the Judgment Day, spare no labor to secure to himself a sentence of absolution. This is an affair which concerns every individual of the human race. The monarch in the height of his power and glory and the poor unknown laborer; they that dwell in marble palaces as well as the inhabitants of wretched, dilapidated huts; the learned and the illiterate, all have to appear before the dread tribunal, and hear the irrevocable sentence, either of reward or of punishment, either of eternal salvation or of everlasting reprobation. In the light of Christian teachings, we fully understand why human life is truly something sacred, and most precious, and why a virtuous, honest, holy life is our greatest good of time and of eternity. These reflections help us to grasp the full meaning of that Gospel sentence, which, when deeply penetrated and acted upon, has saved from hell millions of sinners, and peopled heaven with millions of souls. "What doth it profit a man," says Christ, "if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" [5]

153. Yes, heaven with all its joys, with all its delights, and with the eternity of its duration awaits us, but on condition of our loyalty and fidelity to our Sovereign Creator and Supreme Benefactor. It is in our power either to secure to ourselves a perfect abode with God and His angels in heaven, or by our rebellion against the Lord to excavate for ourselves a dungeon with Satan and the reprobates in hell. Victory over sin is the indispensable condition for deserving eternal life. We cannot have a clearer assurance of this divine truth than that afforded by God's own words in the Book of Ecclesiasticus; words which tell us in

[5] Matt. xvi. 26.

the clearest language that, as the securing of eternal happiness is the result of obedience to God's holy will, so the forfeiting of it, along with its awful consequences, is the outcome of resistance and rebellion to His holy law. The play of man's liberty and its results could scarcely be stated in clearer terms: "God made man from the beginning and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added His commandments and precepts. If thou wilt keep the commandments, and perform acceptable fidelity forever, they shall preserve thee. Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him." [6]

"Man," says the inspired writer, "shall go into the house of his eternity," [7] that is, he shall dwell forever in the abode which he himself shall have chosen during the period of his earthly pilgrimage, the time allowed to him in which to make his choice. Now, this decision as to the choice of one's eternity, either infinitely happy or eternally miserable, must be made by every individual of the human race, without any exception whatever. This is a business so exclusively proper of each individual that no representative, no substitute can replace him, when summoned to appear before God's dread tribunal.

To realize still more vividly the supreme importance of a right use of time, we have but to set it side by side with eternity. In fact, what is a paltry, earthly life even of eighty or ninety years, which very few mortals reach, compared with eternity? No wonder that this thought, when deeply penetrated, has driven men and women by thousands into the solitude of convent life. To master this thought furnishes the strongest motive for a life of the closest union with God.

Fame, riches, sensual gratifications, titles, honors, high social positions, what are all these earthly goods but the playthings of children! They may serve to beguile, to amuse, to interest us for a while, but they possess no intrinsic worth whatever. But there is just one grand and fundamental fact which rescues life from all triviality and meanness, which invests it with a value impossible to exaggerate. And what is that? It is that in this brief and seemingly empty life on earth is contained the pledge of an infinitely happy eternity. The present moment is big with promise: time is the seed, eternity is the harvest. In the short period of man's earthly existence eternal issues are being fought out. Heaven and hell tremble in the balance. There is no fact so certain, there is no fact so awful, as the sentence of the Supreme Judge, on which our everlasting lot depends. My life, my conduct, my fidelity or infidelity to God's holy laws, will decide whether I am to spend eternity in a veritable delirium of delights, or in an everlasting paroxysm of misery and despair.

154. We have ample reason, then, to conclude that as a virtuous life is man's greatest good, so a sinful life is his greatest evil.

[6] Ecclus. xv. 14, 15, 16, 18. [7] Eccles. xii. 5.

Virtue alone can lead man to the heavenly crown, and on that account, surpasses all earthly goods; sin, on the contrary, brings man to endless misery and for that reason, becomes his greatest evil, nay, an infinite evil, and the only one of which we need stand in any fear, or that can do us any permanent injury. The inspired word of God not only teaches this most explicitly, but it impresses the fact upon us by the most appalling and startling examples. Instance after instance of sin's withering, devastating, and blighting effects is flashed upon us from the sacred pages; like the scenes in some awful tragedy they succeed one another with amazing impressiveness. The fall and swift punishment of the rebel angels, the expulsion of our first parents from the earthly paradise, and the consequent calamities that befell them; the awful catastrophe of the universal deluge, the destruction by fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrha, reveal to us both the evil of sin and the infinite hatred that God bears against it.[8]

The question is here asked: Is Almighty God indifferent as to men's attitude toward the laws He published to lead them to the attainment of their end here and hereafter? In other words, has the Creator and Supreme Ruler of mankind made any provision to induce them to the observance of His laws, and to deter them from their violation, whilst leaving untrammelled the full use of their liberty?

The following discussion on the sanction of God's laws will give the answer.

[8] Lessius, De Perf. Div. l. xiii.

PART II

THE SANCTION OF GOD'S LAWS

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM "SANCTION"?

The sanction confirms the law and completes its binding force. Hence it is rightly said to be the protection and bulwark of the law.

155. By sanction is meant the decree by which the legislator determines the good or reward to be obtained by those who observe the law; and the evil or punishment to be incurred by those who transgress it. Hence the distinction between the remunerative and the punitive sanction. The divine sanction is perfect, since it contains the two notes or marks essential to its perfection, and to the attainment of the object for which it is established.

First: It contains a suitably just proposition corresponding to the merit of the good deeds, and to the demerits of evil deeds. Secondly: It is of itself complete and sufficient to induce men to observe the law, and to restrain them from violating it, without tampering with their freedom. That Almighty God, the Supreme Master and Lawgiver, has furnished a perfect sanction to His laws and commandments is proved from His divine attributes, particularly from His infinite wisdom, justice, and majesty.

In the first place, God's attributes of infinite wisdom and justice demand that provision should be made for the observance of the laws intended to lead His rational creatures to their end; an object accomplished by the divine provident decree promising reward to their observers and threatening punishment to their transgressors.

156. This Almighty God does by bestowing eternal happiness on the just, and inflicting everlasting punishment on the wicked. That so wise and just a provision should have been made appears from the fact that any judge, ruler, or legislator failing to provide for the execution of the enacted laws would be looked upon as a foolish and contemptible man, one who makes no distinction between the observers and the violators of his laws, and cares not whether his subjects obey his commands or trample them under foot.

It would be blasphemy to suppose that Almighty God, the Supreme Lawgiver, the Ruler and Judge of mankind, could be liable to such a charge of utter carelessness and incompetence regarding the moral government of His subjects, the human race.

To convince any fair-minded man, free from prejudice, of the divinely revealed truth on the existence and endless duration of both the remunerative and the punitive sanction, we need but attentively reflect on the following common-sense argument: There exists a most just and provident God, the Creator and Ruler of mankind; therefore, this twofold sanction is not a mere human device or a myth, but a truth manifested by God Himself to the human race. The legitimacy of our conclusion is apparent. In fact a just, provident God, who certainly cares for the best interests and welfare of men, His creatures, cannot permit that the overwhelming multitudes of Christian peoples, who faithfully serve Him, and are willing to sacrifice everything, even life itself, for His sake, should be hugely deceived concerning a most fundamental tenet, which they firmly believe, and according to which they regulate all the actions of their responsible life. That fundamental tenet is their full conviction of the certainty of the eternal reward promised to the just, and of the eternal penalty threatened to the wicked. Their warrant is found in Christ's words in His Gospel: "And these [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting."[1] No one can believe that a most wise, just, and good God would suffer that the best and most loyal of His creatures should be unavoidably deceived on that momentous question, on which depends the whole tenor of their mortal life. Now, this wholesale deception would actually occur if their hope of a heavenly recompense to the just, and their fear of hell, chastisement to the wicked, based on divine revelation, and on Christ's own words, cited above, should have no foundation in truth. It is also plain that the whole responsibility of such deception, were it at all possible, would fall back on God Himself, the Author of revelation.

Moreover, we have every reason to believe that God's providence does not fail to supply His rational creatures with the means most apt, suitable, and necessary to enforce and facilitate the observance of His holy laws, on the keeping or transgressing of which hangs an eternity either of happiness or of woe. Such a means is the double sanction explained above.

157. We come to the same conclusion by considering the infinite majesty of God, the Supreme Legislator.

It stands to reason that the Lord, as Supreme Legislator, cannot permit what would be highly unworthy of and utterly unbecoming His Sovereign Majesty; namely, that even one single, rational creature could entirely subtract himself from His do-

[1] Matt. xxv. 46.

minion, and transgress His holy laws with impunity. This is what would actually happen if God merely imposed commandments and supplied no sanction to enforce them. Under the existence and working of such sanction man may, indeed, through the abuse of his liberty, subtract himself from the divine will commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil; but, by so doing, he becomes subject to the divine sanction punishing. It will then be for man a very great penalty to be excluded from heavenly beatitude, which implies the disorder of the natural faculties of his soul, sensitive pains and privation of all goods, both internal and external.

As to the reasons or motives of the punitive sanction, inasmuch as it implies the infliction of pain, they will be pointed out farther on.

158. Though pain or chastisement is always expiatory, it is not always disciplinary or medicinal for the following reasons:

In the first place, if pain is considered as threatened, then its object is to deter the subjects from the infraction of the law and it may then prove beneficial to all who heed such warnings and act accordingly.

Secondly: If we consider pain when actually inflicted, then its essential purpose is the vindication or restoration of the moral order violated by the commission of the divine offense, as will be shown farther on. Even then it has also a secondary object, the warning of surviving men against the transgression of God's holy laws; a warning, which, of course, can no longer benefit those on whom the punishment has been inflicted, as they voluntarily died in sin. Such was the awful calamity that befell the obstinate Jews, according to the prediction of Christ, the Messiah, in whom they refused to believe. "Jesus said to them: I go and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin."[2] "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."[3]

If some of my readers happen to be Unitarians, denying the divinity of Christ and rejecting the dogma of the Holy Trinity, I beg them to reflect on the fearful consequences of their unbelief; and to profit by the Saviour's warning, lest the fate that overtook the obstinate Jews should fall to their lot.

[2] John viii. 21, 24. [3] John iii. 36.

CHAPTER II

THERE EXISTS IN THE PRESENT LIFE AN INITIAL, THOUGH IMPERFECT, SANCTION OF THE DIVINE LAWS

159. It cannot be denied that there is in the present life some sanction, both remunerative and punitive, consisting, therefore, of both reward and punishment.

It would be erroneous to suppose that even here below man can either transgress with impunity the precepts of natural law or observe them without a suitable recompense. The chief reasons are as follows:

First: It was not becoming the wise providence of the Sovereign Creator and Supreme Ruler that man should be enticed to virtue only by the hope of future reward obtainable after his mortal career; or that he should be refrained from sin only by the fear of future punishment, for then he would be deprived of all solace and comfort in the arduous pursuit of virtue, and would not be deterred by any present penalty from the enticing allurements of sin. It was but proper that the good should even now enjoy something like a foretaste of the reward promised and prepared for them in the life to come; and that the wicked should have a timely warning and presentiment of the forthcoming penalties to be undergone in the future life unless they abandon the broad way of iniquity and repent before it is too late. Thus, while the good experience that the observance of God's laws affords them sweetness and consolation, the wicked, on the contrary, cannot but find that their lot is hard and bitter in the extreme. What reason and experience teach, divine revelation fully confirms. Christ said: "Take up My yoke upon you, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is sweet, and My burden light."[1] "For this is the charity of God, that we keep His Commandments, and His Commandments are not heavy."[2]

160. The inspired writer thus speaks in the Old Testament of the fruitless and miserable career of the wicked: "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known."[3]

This truth has been testified by the ancient classical writers. Socrates, for instance, in one of his orations, scathingly denounces and condemns the erroneous opinion of those who held that things in this world are so disposed that men derive more advantage from wickedness than from honesty and goodness.[4]

[1] Matt. xi. 29, 30. [2] 1 John v. 3. [3] Wis. v. 7.
[4] Lib. de Factis. et Dictis Socratis.

Here we fully endorse the sentiments of a distinguished Spanish writer, Benito Feyfoo, O. S. B. (d. 1764).

"Generally virtue is imagined to be all asperity, vice all delight; virtue to be placed amid thorns, vice to be reclining on a bed of flowers. Yet, if we were able to look into the hearts of men immersed in vicious indulgence, our doubts would speedily vanish. By reflection we shall be able to see them in the mirrors of the soul, that is in their countenance, speech, and actions. Many are the afflictions that mar and poison the enjoyment of their pleasures. Their own conscience, a domestic enemy, an unavoidable guest, though highly unwelcome, is always there to mingle gall with the nectar which they are drinking. The Roman sage, Cicero, declares that the vices of the wicked are to them like ever-present, unavoidable furies. In mythology they are the vultures which gnaw and devour the entrails of the wicked Typhœus. They are the eagles which tear the heart of unhappy Prometheus."[5]

161. What we stated above is fully confirmed by experience. In fact, it cannot be denied that even here below many goods are providentially associated with a virtuous life, and many evils generally accompany vicious conduct, some essentially, some naturally, and others morally, according to the division adopted by eminent ethical writers, such as Tongiorgi, Ferretti, Cathrein, Schiffini, and others. In the first place, some goods are *essentially* attached to the practice of virtue, which is wont to bring great peace and joy to the soul springing from the interior conscience approving all good deeds.

"I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience."[6]

Vice, on the contrary, embitters the soul by the rebukes of a guilty conscience. A. Canning observes that no evil is intolerable but a guilty conscience.

162. Secondly: Some goods are *naturally* connected with a virtuous life, and some evils with a sinful one; and this arises from the very constitution of man, the result of the human compound made of soul and body. For virtue, self-control, temperance in particular, that is, a just moderation in the enjoyment of earthly goods, by their very nature, strengthen the forces of the body, preserve its health, free it from many pains and ills and prolong its life. Vice, on the contrary, naturally produces in the body the opposite effects. It weakens its vigor, injures its health, causes many pains and sicknesses, and hastens death. Intemperance, says the old proverb, has killed more men than the sword.

[5] Beautiful Thoughts from Spanish Authors, edited by C. S. Ramage.
[6] Cardinal Wolsey in Henry VIII, act iii, sc. 2.

Thirdly: Some goods accompany virtue, and some evils vice, *morally,* that is, on account of their influence good or bad on our fellow-men. For virtue produces the esteem, love, and confidence of our fellow-creatures, whilst vice generally begets their contempt, diffidence, and aversion.

163. What is said of individuals may be justly applied to society at large, for the happiness or well-being of any human society is secured particularly by righteousness, and its ruin is mainly caused by the vices and crimes of its members. Hence reason, history, and experience teach us that those nations flourish and enjoy true prosperity, in which religion, morality, justice, and benevolence are in full vigor. On the contrary, those human commonwealths are afflicted by many evils and hastening to decay, ruin, and destruction, in which impiety, irrelegion, unbridled license, frauds, and perfidiousness prevail. That such must be the opposite results of right or wrongdoing, we are assured by God's own authority, who thus speaks through His inspired writer: "Justice exalteth a nation; but sin makes nations miserable."[7]

CHAPTER III

THE SANCTION OF THE PRESENT LIFE, BEING IMPERFECT, IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO DETER MEN FROM EVIL-DOING

164. In fact, take as an instance the very trying affliction produced by remorse of conscience as experienced by evil-doers. Is it enough to frighten men from their wicked career? No, by no means. The vehemence of remorse is not generally increased in proportion to man's depravity, and the number of crimes he perpetrates. Hence its stings are often less felt by those who, on account of their tendency toward enormous iniquities, should need a greater restraint. And when it is a question of the performance of good, virtuous deeds, can we say that the interior approval and the joy of an upright conscience are always commensurate with the number and perfection of the virtues practised, sometimes under great difficulties and bitter opposition? What earthly reward is received by the noble heroes who forfeit all things and sacrifice life itself rather than transgress God's holy law, as was done by the seven Machabean brothers and their heroic mother, and by the millions of martyrs that died for Christ?

165. Neither is earthly sanction, in most cases, sufficient to keep men from breaking God's holy law. To do so it should offer to a man's free will a motive superior to all other motives,

[7] Prov. xiv. 34.

advantages and attractions, by which man's will is easily induced to prefer the gratification of his passions to the observance of God's commands. But, as sad experience proves, no earthly sanction can supply such motive. The frequent commission of grievous sins even by those who realize their gravity and know their consequences, even in the present life, shows the truth of our contention.

To convince the reader that the sanction of this life, whatever it be, is by no means sufficient to keep man from the transgression of God's commandments, we add the following reasons from Solimani's Ethica:[1]

First: That a sanction may be perfect, and therefore capable of generally enforcing the execution of the law, even in the face of strong difficulties and violent opposition, it is required that both the reward and the punishment should be proportionate to the arduousness of the virtue to be practised and to the allurement of the sin to be avoided. In other words, it is required that the reward should correspond to the exacting character of the law to be kept and to the observance of the many precepts to be complied with, and that there should be a greater punishment where there is a more grievous breach of the law.

Secondly: The reward must be such as to fully counteract whatever inconvenience or loss must be undergone in the observance of the law; and the punishment should likewise be of such a nature as to surpass whatever advantage may be derived from the infraction of the law.

Now, neither of the aforementioned requisites is verified in the sanction limited to the present life. For though virtue is wont to procure us many both internal and external goods, yet these are not always obtained, and, when realized, they do not furnish a compensation corresponding to the sacrifices endured in the practice of virtue and the shunning of sin.

166. For similar reasons, though vice causes very many calamities and troubles to vicious men, yet these afflictions are often evaded and overcome, and are frequently quite inferior to the advantages and gratifications derived from the indulgence of passions.

Take the case of a man that must incur death if he refuses to commit a crime. Such an individual, if he breaks the law by the perpetration of crime, will indeed be afflicted by internal remorse, but he will enjoy longer life, a boon superior to all other natural goods. And if he keeps the law and refuses to do wrong, he can expect no reward whatever in the present world, as he must forfeit even his very life.

167. The imperfect sanction of human laws can reach only a very limited part of men's activity, while the whole of the interior life, such as secret plottings, criminal designs and con-

[1] Sec. 2, c. 3.

spiracies, almost entirely escape the hands of human justice. Yet they are the remote originators of all kinds of crimes, as we learn from Christ's words in His Gospel: "From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies." [2]

It must, then, be admitted that only a sanction imposed by an omniscient and omnipotent judge can reward the secret sacrifices of the hidden martyr, and punish the concealed crimes of the crafty offender. The sanction then of the present life is insufficient, and we must look for a better one in the next.

Let Plato's thought be a confirmation and a fitting conclusion of this chapter—

In his treatise *De Civitate*, called also *De Republica*, he writes: "We must not make much of the rewards which accompany the practice of virtue in this life, but must conceive a high esteem of those which are found in life immortal." [3]

CHAPTER IV

THE PERFECT SANCTION OF GOD'S LAWS IS FOUND ONLY IN THE LIFE TO COME

168. This is the rational and inevitable conclusion derived from the preceding discussion. On this subject thus spoke the distinguished orator and Doctor of the Church, St. John Chrysostom, in his sermon on Divine Providence: "If after the present life nothing else awaits man in the future, then we must conclude that there is no God. For, if God exists, He is a just God, and as such He will hereafter allot to each of His rational creatures reward or punishment according to each one's deserts. If, however, no such retribution awaits man beyond the grave, where and when shall the just be rewarded, and the wicked punished? Here below many live comfortably and with honor, though wicked, and many are miserable, though good. If, therefore, nothing remains after the present life, the just will depart in misery, and the wicked leave this world after enjoying in it an undeserved felicity. The former will receive no recompense for their virtuous deeds, and the latter will fear no chastisement for their crimes. Where then is justice? If God is not just, there is no God. But all creatures loudly proclaim that God exists. Therefore He is just; therefore He must grant to each what he has deserved by his good or wicked deeds. This is so plain and manifest that Jews and Christians, Greeks and Romans, pagans and believers, in short, all classes of men, are in perfect accord in acknowledging the imperative necessity of a future retribution."

[2] Matt. xv. 19.

[3] L. I. Patuzzi, p. 23.

The attainment of man's last end is the just reward of the observance of God's laws. This is not only possible, but also certain; it is all that the Lord requires from His creatures upon earth for their admission to the possession of heaven: and consistently with His wisdom and justice, He could not require less. And, on the other hand, the exclusion of man from the attainment of his last end is a just penalty of the grievous violation of the divine commands, the utter disregard of the condition to be fulfilled for the realization of man's last secondary end, the eternal possession of God.

169. Though the penalty referred to above, that is, missing one's last end, is quite just, and the chief one, yet it is not held to be a sufficient punishment for the wicked; hence it is further required that, besides forfeiting their last end, the possession of God, they should suffer some other affliction. St. Thomas argues that those who rebel against God must be punished, not only by their perpetual exclusion from heavenly beatitude, but also by the infliction of something painful. He alleges several reasons to prove his assertion, of which we here cite the following:

First reason: The punishment must be proportionate and fitted to the guilt. Now in the guilt we find two distinct disorders; namely, the sinner's turning away from God, his last end, and turning himself to creatures, as if they were his ultimate end. He must therefore be punished both by being eternally excluded from his true end, and by enduring from creatures some suffering or painful harm. The pain of loss chastises the sinner for the first guilt, and the pain of sense for the second. As to the latter penalty, it is intended as a chastisement for the sinner's abuse of both his spiritual and sensitive faculties as instruments of God's offense. What was given him for legitimate purposes and as means of virtue, was turned by the abuse of God's gifts into occasions of sin. That this will be the lot of the wicked we are assured by the divinely inspired testimony of both the Old and the New Testament: "That they might know that by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented."[1] "As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her."[2]

Second reason: The punishment must be such as to correspond to the guilt or offense, on account of which it is inflicted. Now the soul, by the commission of sin, subjected itself to the body by yielding to its criminal concupiscence. It is therefore but just that for its punishment the soul should be subjected to the action of some corporeal thing such as hell's fire, as divine revelation teaches, if the sin has not been atoned for and blotted out by timely repentance.[3]

Third reason: Penalties are threatened and inflicted in order

[1] Wis. xi. 17. [2] Apoc. xviii. 7.
[3] St. Thomas, Suppl., 3ae p. qu. 70, art. 3.

that men may be deterred from sin through fear of incurring them. As experience teaches, sinners are not restrained from evil by the loss of that which they have no wish to secure. Hence, those whose will is deliberately averted from the last end, the possession of God, feel no regret for being excluded from it. Such individuals evidently cannot be deterred from the divine offense on account of their missing thereby their last end. It was therefore necessary that some other penalty feared by sinners should be allotted.

Fourth reason: Inveterate sinners, fearing neither God nor man, who try to persuade themselves that if there shall be any penalty at all, the only one awaiting them in the next world will be their exclusion from the vision and possession of God, have been heard saying: "To enjoy our paradise on earth, we are willing to give up that of heaven." [4]

Exclude the pain of sense from the punitive sanction and the two following absurd consequences will be inevitable: *First:* The most reckless sinners will be free from the only penalty they dread, that of sensitive affliction. *Secondly:* The most powerful deterrent from sin, the torments of hell, will be entirely done away with, and consequently there will remain no motive strong enough to control and subdue the rebellious passions of man, a standing menace to the welfare of society and its law-abiding members. Moreover, as good things causing enjoyment are due to the just, so evil things producing pain should befall the wicked, as it is quite just that each should receive either contentment or affliction, according to the end which he prefixed to himself, God or the creatures, and according to the choice that each one freely made before his departure from this world. Therefore, twofold is the punishment inflicted on all who appear at the judgment seat with the canker of grievous sin on their soul, the pain of loss and that of sense. The former consists in the eternal privation of heavenly beatitude; the latter results from positive affliction or pain; a chastisement now endured by the fallen angels and the reprobate souls.

Sins, therefore, are also punished by the infliction of some sensitive pains. The Angelical Doctor, as has been noted above, in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, alleges several arguments to establish that proposition and to assign the reason why Holy Scripture asserts that the reprobates will suffer a twofold penalty, the privation of the beatific vision, and the torment of hell's fire. Hence the sentence of the Supreme Judge: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire." [5]

It was therefore necessary to add to the loss of man's last end the infliction of sensitive pains, which are much more dreaded by men than the privation of the beatific vision. Whoever holds the opposite view falls into the error of the Arabian philosopher

[4] St. Thomas Contra Gent., l. iii, c. 145. [5] Matt. xxv. 41.

Algazel, who held that the only penalty incurred by impenitent sinners is the loss of their last end. An American politician, anxious to be elected United States Senator, was heard to say that he preferred that position in Congress to the bliss of heaven, whatever that might be.

The sentence to be pronounced by Christ, the Sovereign Judge, on the last day: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels,"[6] is but a confirmation of the verdict given by the same Divine Judge at the particular judgment, held immediately after death. The eternal sufferings of the wicked in their soul after death, and in their body also after the final resurrection, is the terrible dogmatic truth now assumed, but which shall be fully established in Parts VII, VIII, and IX of our book, where the chief difficulties raised by Unitarians and the advocates of all the theories opposed to the Christian dogma will be analyzed and refuted.

170. In the next chapter we shall see how true it is that the endless duration of hell's pains, which Catholic faith teaches as a divinely revealed dogma, is not contrary to the dictates of right reason. Nay, we contend that the promptings of reason and common sense are in perfect harmony with the teachings of faith.

As in our controversy with unbelievers and rationalists we limit our discussion principally to the truths that have been defined as articles of faith, we deem it advisable to premise the following remarks:

In his theological treatise *De Deo Creatore* (n. 799), the renowned Father Perrone writes: "It is of faith: 1st, that hell exists; 2nd, that it is a place of torments comprising the pain of loss, the forfeiture of heavenly bliss, and the pain of sense inflicted on the reprobate souls while separated from the body, and on both the body and the soul after the general resurrection. 3rd, that the penalty of hell is incurred by all who die in the state of grievous personal or actual sin. 4th, that the sufferings of the damned are eternal. Other points, not explicitly contained in revelation, and which have not been defined by the Church, are not matters of faith. As to the nature and quality of the pains endured in hell, that for instance of a real, not a metaphorical fire, we fully adhere to the opinion commonly accepted and taught in the Church, for such a doctrine, namely, the presence and action of real, true fire, is held as certain, so that it would be extremely rash to doubt it, or call it in question."[7]

171. What, then, we know from divine revelation, and from the teachings of its authorized, infallible interpreter, the Catholic Church, is that hell's torments are real, eternal, and incurred by death in mortal sin. Is not this terrible? And what more do we require to impress us with a salutary fear of God's judg-

[6] Matt. xxv. 41.

[7] See Mark ix, 42–47. See also Part VIII.

ments? Rightfully therefore did Diderot (d. 1784) remark: "A sensible man will act in life, as though there was a hell, so long as even only one fragment of doubt as to its actual existence remains in his mind." And what, I say, should man's conduct be when he reflects that, as will be shown, the voice of divine revelation, the whole of Christendom, the promptings of reason, and the universal consent of mankind proclaim the existence and endless duration of that punishment, thus removing all doubts as to the stern reality of the punitive sanction, which the omnipotent Judge placed upon His laws?

CHAPTER V

AGREEMENT OF THE VERDICT OF REASON ILLUMINED BY FAITH WITH THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE REVELATION ON THE NECESSITY OF AN ENDLESS PUNITIVE RETRIBUTION

This will be proved by the demonstration of two distinct propositions:

FIRST PROPOSITION

172. *Human reason, dispassionately consulted, proves that everlasting punishment, taught by God's revelation, is just.*

We proceed to prove that such penalty is proportionate to the gravity of the offense for which it is inflicted. In fact, a punishment that bears an equitable proportion with the disorderly act to be vindicated and avenged must be said to be quite just. And so it is, indeed, for a grievous sin, in a certain true sense, is said to be infinite. In fact, what is a grievous mortal sin? It is an aversion or turning away from God, man's last and supreme end, joined with an explicit or at least an implicit contempt of Him. Now, such an aversion and contempt constitute an offense of a gravity proportionate to the majesty, greatness, and dignity of the person offended. And the greater the distance in dignity between the offender and the person offended, so much greater and grievous is the offense. As the person offended is God, an infinite Majesty, and the offender is a finite being, infinitely inferior to Him, it follows that in every grievous sin we find an injury and contempt in a certain manner infinite. Therefore, a punishment in some way infinite is due to it. Such a punishment cannot be infinite intensively; first, because finite creatures are not capable of suffering infinite pain; secondly, because such infinity would render impossible the apportionment of punishment according to the degrees of guilt. The penalty, therefore, to bear an equitable proportion to the gravity of the offense, must be infinite in duration, that is, eternal. That the

penalty should be infinite in duration may be shown by the following additional reflections: A man dies impenitent in the state of mortal sin. Future punishment is the effect of grievous deadly sin, and it must endure as long as the sin, its cause, remains. Now, sin can be removed only by God's pardon and the infusion of sanctifying grace, on condition of timely repentance. As the granting of pardon, and the bestowal of sanctifying grace are by God's ordinance limited to the present world, the impenitent sinner's guilt will remain as long as he himself will last, that is, forever. No injustice can be detected in this that the penalty should last as long as the guilt, that is, eternally. This reasoning is fully sustained by Christ's own words in His Gospel: "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost [that is, resist divine grace by refusing to repent in this life] shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin."[1] An everlasting sin surely deserves an everlasting punishment.[2]

For other arguments proving that the chastisement of rebellious, obstinate, impenitent sinners, though finite in intensity, must be infinite in duration, see St Thomas.[3]

173. Shall we say that men can go on defying God, breaking His laws, despising His revelation, contemning the atonement of the world's Redeemer, and that the Almighty will, according to the Universalists' theory, smile on His enemies for all eternity? Can anybody suppose that God's omnipotence is unable to maintain the moral government He has established upon earth? Has He created beings which He cannot control? Has He peopled any part of the universe with creatures that may with impunity defy His authority? Christian believers must recognize the fact that God, in Holy Scripture, speaks more often of His hatred of sin than He does of His mercy. Not because He is more just than merciful, for all His attributes are perfectly equal, but because men stand in greater need of being reminded of God's anger against sinners than of His love for the just. Some industrious Bible scholar ascertained the fact that the Bible speaks of God's love twenty-eight times and it speaks not less than sixty times of His wrath and indignation against blasphemous and impenitent sinners.

I cannot vouch for the correctness of this calculation, first, because I had no leisure to verify it, and secondly, because Protestant Bible scholars generally discard from their Canon of inspired Books considerable portions and fragments which the Catholic Church has always recognized and revered as authentic and divinely inspired. At all events, the above calculation and comparison may be admitted as sufficiently exact, as far as it goes, for our purpose. All that are imbued with genuine Chris-

[1] Mark iii. 29.

[2] St. Thomas in II. Sent., q. 43.

[3] Ia, 2nd, 2ae, qu. 87a, 3, 4, 5. In II Sent. dist. 42. Lessius, l. xiii, c. 25. Patuzzi, l. iii, c. 25.

tian spirit feel the gravity of all offenses against God, and exhibit a tender care and solicitude for His honor. They do not make light of blasphemy, apostasy or atheism, as it is done by some modern governments under the wrong plea of liberty of conscience. They hold that insults to the Supreme Ruler of all nations rightly deserve punishments proportionate to the gravity of the crimes, such as are inflicted in the future world.

SECOND PROPOSITION

174. *Eternal punishment is necessary to restrain man's will from evil-doing, and induce him to the keeping of God's commands.*

If we take into account man's fallen nature, the violence of his passions, the intoxicating allurements of sensible goods, particularly the enticing pleasures of the flesh, and the hardship at times encountered in the practice of virtue, we cannot but be convinced of the fact that temporary penalties, however prolonged, do not offer to men motives sufficiently strong to induce them to observance of the divine law in all the circumstances in which they may find themselves during the period of their trial or probation upon earth. This is shown by the criminals themselves, who to give full scope to their disorderly passions, strive to persuade themselves and others that future punishments, if they exist at all, at least, are not eternal, or that the souls of the wicked will be annihilated, or, after due atonement, admitted to enjoy perfect happiness with the angels and the saints. Such attitude of impenitent, deluded sinners appears to be rather old, as it is seen from the following verses of the skeptical Roman poet, Lucretius: "If men were sure that there will certainly be an end to sufferings, they would have some reason for combating religion and resisting the threats of sages. But now they have neither reason, nor power of doing so, for they must fear the eternal pains after death.—*Aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.*"[4] St. Jerome remarks: "The most perverse belief, that hell's pains are to have an end, completely destroys the fear of God, and makes easy to men the career of sin; since they think, with the heretic Origen, that even Satan, the chief author of many sins, will, after undergoing some suffering, be ultimately saved."

When it is argued that it is the duty of a just, fair, impartial judge to inflict just punishment, we freely accept this correct principle of civil jurisprudence founded on reason and common sense, and maintain that it is acted upon by Him whose wisdom and holiness constitute the supreme, immutable standard of all justice. Eternal punishment being perfectly just, as it has been shown above, God acts in full harmony with His attribute of justice, when inflicting it on impenitent sinners.

[4] De Rerum Natura I. 108.

175. Some of our opponents are wont to argue as follows: As the principal purpose of punishment is to deter men from the transgression of God's laws, there can be no reason or motive for the existence of eternal hell, since such an end becomes perfectly useless for the condemned.

Here is our answer: In the first place, it is not true that the primary and chief scope of punishment is to deter men from the divine offense, and to bring about their correction and reform. For its principal purpose is the restoration of the moral order violated by sin, and a condign reparation of God's honor outraged by sinners. Its infliction proclaims to the world the fact that divine laws cannot be transgressed with impunity; and warns surviving men against their violation; and it might have benefited also the present reprobates, if, in their lifetime, they had heeded the many Scriptural threats and acted accordingly. This primary essential object is secured by endless punishment.

176. In fact, it restores and repairs the violated order, not physically, for what has been done cannot be undone, but morally. For, as sinners by their evil doings publicly proclaim that they may refuse obedience to their Creator and Lord and fear no evil; so punishment is a practical, public affirmation that all rational creatures are solemnly bound to submit to God's holy will under the menace of penalties that shall never end. This is the salutary truth taught us in Holy Writ: "Say not: How mighty am I? And who shall bring me under for my deeds? for God will surely take revenge. Say not: I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder." [5]

St. Augustine, commenting, as it were, on this text, writes: "God is patient because He is eternal. Having a whole eternity in which to avenge His outraged majesty and repair the insults flung in His face, He can well afford to let the sinner run riot for the few years of his earthly existence, for as we read in Second Machabees vi. 26, men cannot escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead." [6]

177. So much about the punishment's primary end. As to its secondary purpose, intended to deter men from transgressing God's laws, it is evident that it cannot fulfil such an object in behalf of the damned at the time of its infliction or after, though it was given as a warning to all, when as yet available.

No one can deny the powerful efficacy of eternal punishment in effecting the conversion of even the most obdurate and inveterate sinners. Many instances are related of sinners who, after bidding defiance to nearly all human and divine laws, were finally converted by a serious consideration of hell's interminable torments awaiting the impenitent in the world to come. The Angelic Doctor treats of this subject in his *Summa*—1ª, 2æ, Qu. 87.

[5] Ecclus. v. 3, 4.

[6] See Wisdom xvi. 15.

178. The punishment inflicted by civil power, according to the provisions of the criminal codes, is not always medicinal for him who is condemned, but only for others surviving him.

A criminal is executed, not to obtain his reform, rendered then impossible, but for the benefit of surviving citizens, that they, frightened, at least, by the fear of punishment, may desist from evil doings, according to the saying of the Book of Proverbs, "The wicked man being scourged, the fool shall be wiser."[7] And the same may be said of the eternal pains inflicted on the wicked by divine justice. They are medicinal, exemplary and disciplinary only to those who are as yet in a condition to profit by them, as an inducement to avoid sin. The Royal Psalmist says: "Thou, O Lord, hast given a warning to them that fear Thee, that they may flee from before the bow."[8]

It is evident that the eternal damnation of the wicked is intended for the correction and reform of Christian peoples, the members of the militant Church for punishments are beneficial, both when inflicted and when threatened.

Hence God's most benevolent purpose is to impress His rational creatures with the truth that their greatest good enjoyable in the present world, and guaranteeing perfect, immense, endless happiness in the next, consists in fulfilling all their obligations to God, to themselves, and their fellow-men. We must also remember that the penalties allotted to the wicked are a consequence of the prevision of their deliberate transgression of God's holy law, and their final impenitence.

179. In this connection let the reader remember that God's foreknowledge of the reprobates' sins, of their ultimate impenitence and consequent damnation, does not at all interfere with their liberty, as it is shown by the solution of our opponents' objection given in Part VIII, n. **547.** One testimony from a very distinguished writer will at present suffice for our purpose.

St. John Chrysostom (A. D., 407) speaks thus: "We must not think that because scandals have been foreseen by God's prescience, therefore they will occur; but because they will, in the course of time, occur, He foresees them; and if they were not to occur, neither would He have foreseen and foretold them."

Catholic philosophy, while admitting the attribute of foreknowledge in God, attests, at the same time, the undeniable fact of the liberty and responsibility of man.

180. The eighth and ninth parts of our volume will be specially devoted to the solution of the main difficulties advanced by our opponents—against the revealed dogma of eternal punishment. Here we briefly recall some objections that are more directly connected with our present subject, the certainty and necessity of the punitive sanction.

[7] Prov. xix. 25.

[8] Ps. lix. 6. See St. Thomas, Suppl. 3ae P. Qu 99, Art. 1.

First, it is asked: "Cannot we hope that God's infinite mercy will be strikingly displayed in finally delivering the unhappy reprobates from eternal damnation?"

God's mercy is indeed infinite in itself, but not in its external manifestation, that is, in its actual exercise, or in its effects toward sinful creatures. Moreover, mercy can never conflict with other divine attributes, such as wisdom and justice. Whilst God is infinitely merciful, He is also infinitely just. In the present life He makes a most generous display of His mercy, almost forgetting, so to speak, the claims of His justice. These will be inevitably acted upon in the future world, where the exercise of pardon and clemency shall come to an end.[9]

Second, it is suggested: "But is it not reasonable that Almighty God, so wise and good, should make allowance for the extreme weakness of fallen man, born in sin, and for the violence of his rebellious passions?"

God's wisdom and goodness made ample provision to offset man's weakness and inclination to evil, by supplying him with most efficacious means of resistance to temptation, such as the power of His grace, a help fully superior to all earthly and infernal attacks, which has been placed within the reach of all in answer to prayer. He is, moreover, assisted in his struggles against sin by the intercessory power of the angels and saints, and particularly by their Queen, the immaculate Mother of the Divine Saviour, who has been called by the Holy Fathers, *Omnipotentia Supplex,* supplicating omnipotence. Besides, did not Christ place at our disposal the potent aid of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist?

Of the power of the devil, which sinners are wont to exaggerate, and allege as pretexts to extenuate their falls, St. Augustine says: "The devil, like a furious chained dog, may bark, but he will bite only those that come within his reach by yielding to temptation.—*Latrare potest sed mordere non potest nisi volentem.*"

181. It has also been asked: "May not Almighty God, as Sovereign Lord, exercise His power of clemency and the right of forgiveness by delivering the reprobates from their torments?"

Answer: It is one thing to possess the power or right of clemency, and quite another thing to exercise or use it in behalf of the condemned. That God possesses such a right we willingly grant, but we deny that, as a matter of fact, He will ever exercise it in behalf of the reprobates by delivering them from their infernal prison. For God cannot act in direct opposition to the requirements of His wisdom and justice, and to the explicit decrees He has proclaimed in Holy Scripture, where it is distinctly announced that the exercise of mercy, clemency, and forgiveness is restricted to man's present life. The following Scrip-

[9] See Psalms cxliv. 9, and lxxv. 8 on God's mercy and justice.

tural quotations also disprove the theory of other trials and probations in the future world:

"Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly; for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in the next world, whither thou art hastening." [10] Here the sacred writer evidently refers to the time before the coming of the Messias and before His ascension, when the souls of the just in Limbo could no longer gain any merit by any good works, through the exercise of their faculties.

"You shall seek Me," said Christ to the obstinate Jews, "and you shall die in your sins." [11] St. Paul after quoting the words of the prophet Isaias: "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee," [12] adds: "Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation." [13]

The same Apostle thus wrote to the Galatians, his converts: "Whilst we have time let us work good." [14]

Our Blessed Saviour, comparing the present life to the clear day, and the future life to the dark night, says of the latter: "The night cometh, when no man can work." [15]

182. Universalists have been compelled to acknowledge that not a single text can be cited from the Old Testament or from the New, which even hints at a continued or second probation after death. An American writer says: "I have long searched with anxious solicitude for a text in the Bible which would even *seem* to favor the idea of a future probation. I cannot find it." [16]

That the wicked in hell should wish their own annihilation is quite natural, and easily understood. But they know full well how vain such wishes are, for they learned, at their particular judgment, both the cause of their reprobation and its eternal duration. Their terrible discomfiture has been revealed in Holy Scripture in the following sentence of the Apocalypse, which the modern advocates of the annihilation scheme should bear in mind: "And in those days men shall seek death and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them." [17]

The last subterfuge of our adversaries is thus expressed in their writings: "Has not Almighty God the power to annihilate the souls of the wicked?"

Answer: The real question at issue here is not whether the Supreme Creator possesses the absolute power of reducing to nothing any of His creatures, which no one can deny, for the infinite power needed for creation is certainly available also for annihilation. But the point to be established is whether the

[10] Eccles. ix. 10. [11] John viii. 21. [12] Is. xlix. 8.
[13] 2 Cor. vi. 2. [14] Gal. vi. 10. [15] John ix. 4.
[16] Oxenham, Catholic Eschatology, p. 145, note. [17] Apoc. ix. 6.

Creator is bound to and will ever use that power, particularly in regard to the souls of the reprobates.

183. Our answer is an emphatic negative, for the following reasons borrowed mainly from St. Thomas: First, as it is the rebellious will that acts contrary to God's law, so it is quite just that such will should be punished. Annihilation would do away with all punishment, particularly on the theory of those who hold that the reprobates are to be reduced to nothing immediately after death, who will thus escape all penalties.

Besides, the wicked, if annihilated, would be exempt from the punishment which they really fear, sensitive pains; and by ceasing to exist, they will also be free from the eternal regret and remorse caused by the forfeiture of an infinite good, the sight, possession and enjoyment of God. Briefly, annihilation would be a penalty far from being proportionate to the gravity and duration of the offense, as noted above, and absolutely incapable of restraining man from the commission of sin. To give some completeness to the treatment of punitive sanction we were obliged to refer to the theories of Universalists, and annihilationists. What is here briefly hinted at, the reader will find amply discussed in Parts VII, VIII and IX. He will kindly pardon some unavoidable repetitions.

We have shown in this second part that the sanction of God's laws, whether remunerative or punitive, is perfect and sufficient, because it is eternal. We therefore took for granted the immortality of the soul, the subject of that sanction. What has been hitherto assumed as certain, is now proved at full length in the following part, devoted exclusively to the demonstration of the immortality of the human soul, and the consequent eternity of future retribution.

PART III

THE IMMORTALITY OF MAN'S SOUL

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

184. In the preceding pages we spoke of the eternal retribution that awaits man in the future world; a momentous truth clearly stated in Holy Writ, as will be shown later on in its proper place. As the twofold sanction discussed above necessarily implies the endless duration of the human soul, it would seem that we might at once proceed to treat of the special retribution promised to the just, and of the penalty threatened to the wicked, both of which have been proved to be certain and everlasting. We think, however, that the doctrine of man's eternal destiny will be more convincingly demonstrated if a part of our work will be specially devoted to the development of the proofs which reason, divine revelation, tradition, Church authority, and the general consent of mankind furnish on that paramount truth. This we shall do in this third part of our work on the immortality of the human soul.

As we learn from revelation that both the soul and the body of man are destined to have an eternal duration, it seems that we should confirm from reason the endless existence of those two constituents of man. But as the interminable duration of the human body, after the final resurrection, is a truth, not of reason, but of faith, and therefore known to us only from revelation, we shall have to treat of it in separate subsequent chapters. In the present and the next three chapters we limit our discussion to the demonstration of the immortality of the soul, as proved by arguments derived from reason.

185. By "immortality" we mean that property of the human soul in virtue of which it survives the dissolution of the body at death, continuing in the possession of an endless, conscious existence, to receive from God, in the future life, either reward or punishment, according to its deserts; an irrevocable lot decided at the particular judgment, at the moment of its departure from this world. This world teems with wonders, evidences of God's infinite wisdom and omnipotent power; but by far the greatest

wonder is man himself, the possessor of a free, intelligent, undying soul.

This truth forms the consolation of the just, and the terror of the wicked. The old Roman bard, Lucretius, expressed the ardent wish of both the ancient and the modern Epicureans, when he thus wrote in his poem, *De Rerum Natura*,[1] "That dreadful fear of hell must be driven out, which disturbs the life of man and renders it miserable, overcasting all things with the gloom of death and leaving no tranquil unalloyed pleasure."

186. If belief in immortality is done away with, the very concept of virtue and vice, of right and wrong, of justice and iniquity will be swept out of existence, and, with it, every trace of order, civilization, and peace would entirely disappear. Still more dreadful consequences would follow from such a denial. In fact, what would then become of God? He would be looked upon as a sort of royal weakling, or the puniest lawgiver, utterly incapable of enforcing the laws governing the great human family and its individual members. It must be said that the abolition of all belief in the immortal existence of man's soul would sap the very foundations of our social fabric, and thus realize the wild schemes of anarchy and rank socialism throughout the length and breadth of the land. But, thank God, no such catastrophe need be feared, for, as we shall prove later on, Divine Providence made ample provision for the preservation of this master truth among the nations of mankind, as long as they shall inhabit this region of the planetary world. Moreover, the deeply rooted conviction of the soul's immortality in the conscience of the human race supplies one of the strongest refutations of all materialistic opponents, past, present and future.

187. We are concerned here with a truth which is not merely accessible to every individual who makes a right use of his understanding, but is actually and in a measure easily apprehended under the guidance of an impulse inherent in all rational nature. This instinct, which asserts itself with irresistible strength in every age and among men of the most widely different degrees of culture, is part and parcel of the rational nature of humanity. Now, it is impossible that a natural instinct, which is at one with reason (the *sensus communis* of the schoolmen) should lead men to a deliberate countenancing of error. Nature may be hard to read at times, but she never deludes us. Hence, the universal conviction of the immortality of the soul, and the certainty of a retribution to come, known to reason and sanctioned and safeguarded by primitive divine revelation, is based upon a real and solid foundation. To the materialists, who have derided this doctrine as a sheer delusion and a pleasing dream, we put this question: If the conviction of a future life is nothing but a dream, how does it come to be so universal? By

[1] i, iii, 37.

what possible means could the subjective imaginings of this or that individual become the common property of humanity and make themselves felt as an essential and dominating factor in all men's thoughts and desires? For the question here is of a conviction rooted in the consciousness of human dignity, in the ardent longings of men's hearts, and in the realized sense of incompleteness, which characterizes our life upon earth. The real worth of human existence is fully understood when it is looked upon in the light of eternity. Rousseau said in his *Emile:* "No argument of the so-called scientists, however subtle, will ever shake my belief in immortality. I am conscious of it, I desire it, and I will fight for it to my last breath."

Immortality, the corner-stone of religion and morality, has been fiercely assailed and denied by many, not because it is not solidly proved, but because some of its opponents, reckless in their moral conduct, dread the awful responsibility which it entails in the endless world to come. It is our duty, then, to place this truth on a firm and impregnable basis, from which no amount of sophistry shall ever be able to dislodge it.

188. Nothing but the consciousness of immortality can induce man to maintain himself at the level of his true dignity. "For as much," says Plato in his *Phaedo,* "as the soul is manifestly immortal, there is no deliverance from future evil except by the attainment of the highest virtue and wisdom." Christian faith, thanks to the Divine Saviour's redemption, is satisfied with less. Sanctifying grace is enough to land us on the shores of eternal bliss. Encouraged by the prospect of heavenly happiness in the world to come, our life acquires an importance that cannot be exaggerated. Divine faith and grace give strength to curb unruly passions, to bear the sorrows of life without a murmur, and to comply courageously and joyfully with the injunctions of God's holy laws. Nothing is impossible, nothing is too difficult for heroic souls when there is a question of winning the palm of everlasting glory at the cost of many sacrifices and even of life itself, if need be, as millions of holy martyrs did. If our belief in a happy future existence, to be allotted to the just, is robust, clearly defined and beyond the power of human reasoning to shake, we owe it to the religion of Jesus Christ and His Church, to whom He solemnly guaranteed freedom from all error and deception even to the end of the world.

To account for the denial of the soul's immortality, so prevalent in our days among the educated classes and professional men, the following reasons or causes, among others, have been assigned by thoughtful, observing men: False principles of philosophy; false science, the *falsi nominis scientia,* mentioned by St. Paul,[2] particularly extreme evolutionism, a theory diametrically opposed to the concepts of spirituality and immor-

[2] 1 Tim. vi. 20.

tality predicated of man's soul. Add the skeptical habits now so common and the desire of appearing before the public as being in full agreement with the latest, most up-to-date, advanced views held and taught by university professors, though they may never have been made the subject of conscientious examination. Byron at twenty-three petulantly wrote: "I will have nothing to do with your immortality; we are miserable enough in this life without the absurdity of speculating upon another." Though a modern scientist designated the immaterial, undying principle within ourselves as a *vapid figment*, yet we confidently affirm that science, if rightly interrogated, bears witness to the incorporeal nature, the independent action, the distinct personality, and the indestructibleness of the human soul.

Of all grave, serious questions that may occupy the human mind, there is none so important in itself and so far-reaching in its consequences as the question of the interminable hereafter awaiting all human beings beyond the tomb. Fortunately there is no room for doubt on this momentous truth proclaimed by divine revelation and demonstrated by the voice of reason. Indeed, the strength of the Catholic position rests not only on special proofs taken singly, but also and particularly on the cumulative force of the many arguments that support it, and produce a certainty, which is simply irresistible in the mind of any man that is open to conviction.

CHAPTER II

THE IMMORTALITY OF MAN'S SOUL PROVED FROM REASON

189. *First:* Immortality, that is, endless duration in existence, may belong to a being either necessarily, or naturally, or miraculously. It belongs necessarily or essentially to that being which is self-existent, whose existence is identical with its essence, and therefore exists by such absolute necessity that its non-existence would involve a downright absurdity and contradiction. When, therefore, to be, to exist, constitutes the very essence of a being, to such a being immortality belongs necessarily and essentially. What reason teaches is fully confirmed by God's own revelation. In fact, to the question of Moses: "What shall I say, if the children of Israel ask me what is the name of Him that sent me?" The Lord made this answer: "Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is, hath sent me to you."[1]

There is only one such a Being and that is God, who, on that account, is more properly called eternal, as His existence has neither beginning nor end. And it is in this sense that St. Paul

[1] Ex. iii. 13, 14.

writes in his first letter to Timothy: "The King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality."[2] God alone is immortal by essence. His rational creatures, angels and human souls, are immortal by participation.

Secondly: Immortality belongs naturally to a being which, though contingent—that is, not existing by any necessity of its own nature—yet has been so intrinsically constituted by its Creator that it cannot cease to exist except through the action of Divine Omnipotence annihilating it. That God will never exercise such a power, even on one single angelic spirit or human soul, will be proved in its proper place in the sequel. This participated or natural immortality belongs to angels and human souls.

Thirdly: A being is said to be miraculously or supernaturally immortal, which, though material in its nature or composition, and therefore destined to disintegration, dissolution, and corruption, yet is preserved in its existence and integrity by a miracle of Divine Omnipotence. Such was the body of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in their state of innocence. To this miraculous or supernatural immortality are applied the following words of the inspired writer: "God created man incorruptible."[3] The sacred writer here evidently refers to the miraculous incorruptibility granted to man's body in the state of innocence, for his soul, being spiritual, is naturally incorruptible. Of the restoration of this gift by Christ's redemption St. Paul discourses at great length in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption."[4]

It is plain that we are here exclusively concerned at present with the immortality of the human soul belonging to it, not essentially, nor miraculously, but naturally.

It is well known that the chief psychological or metaphysical proof of the immortality of the soul is derived from its spirituality; a truth which we might take for granted, but which we have been advised to demonstrate.

Moreover, as will be shown, the metaphysical argument, based on the spiritual nature of the soul, constitutes only one out of the many rational proofs of its immortality.

ADVERSARIES

190. In the first place, the principal opponents of this truth are, of course, the materialists. According to them, the whole man perishes when the physico-chemical elements constituting the human organism are disintegrated and dissolved by death. In plain language, the great anxiety of the materialists and the main object of all their efforts are directed to persuade them-

[2] 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. [3] Wis. ii. 23. [4] 1 Cor. xv. 22, 42.

selves and others that there is no such thing as future life with its eternal sanction. It is on this account, and not for scientific reasons, that they deny human responsibility and the spirituality and immortality of the soul.

In the second place, we must mention the partisans or defenders of the so-called voluntary immortality. Their theory consists in this, that man may freely choose either an honest life, to be rewarded by eternal happiness, or a sinful life, which will end in nothing, and thus be punished by annihilation.

191. Among the defenders of this theory are reckoned the French authors, Charles Lambert, M. Pitavel, M. Renouvier, and not a few modern English writers, whose leader and spokesman is the Rev. Edward White, Congregational minister.

This erroneous and antichristian scheme, devised to replace the divinely revealed dogma of eternal punishment, has been ably refuted by Catholic authors, among whom Msgr. Elie Mérie in his two volumes entitled "L'Autre Vie," and Père Felix, S. J., in his "Eternité," p. 387, and H. N. Oxenham in his "Catholic Eschatology and Universalism," deserve special mention. We shall deal with this hypothesis of voluntary immortality and free annihilation in Part IX.

192. Before establishing the truth of the soul's immortality, we must briefly treat of its nature, of its simplicity and spirituality, preliminary notions preparing the way to the demonstration of its endless existence after its separation from the body by death.

By the soul we mean that principle or force, in virtue of which man feels, thinks, and wills; a definition on which all sound philosophers are agreed.

The soul, being essentially distinct from the body, which it informs and animates, is simple both as to quantity and as to essence.

It is quantitatively simple, for it does not consist of integrant parts; it is essentially simple, because it is not made up of several constituent elements.

By affirming the soul's simplicity we mean to state that it is not composed of separate parts, or of diverse principles of any kind; consequently that it is not extended.

According to Catholic philosophy the soul is the principle of life and of its vital acts, feeling, thinking, and willing. Life is the activity by which a being moves itself. But motion in man is not only physical, as in the lower animals, but also intellectual and moral.

A. *The human soul is a simple substance.*

Many are the arguments alleged by philosophers to prove that it is simple. Brevity compels us to limit the reader's attention to only two of them, which seem both clear and conclusive.

I. We are all intimately conscious of the fact that we may ex-

perience several different sensations at the same time, and compare them with one another. This could not be done if our soul were something extended, and therefore not simple but material. Here is our reason. These different sensations are either located in diverse parts of the feeling subject, or are all gathered in one single part. If they reside in diverse parts, none of them will be conscious, at the same time, of all the scattered sensations, hence comparison between them will be impossible. If, on the other hand, the sensations are all gathered together in one part of the sentient subject, we ask the materialist whether this part is simple or extended. If he says that it is simple, then he grants that the sentient soul is simple, the very conclusion we are after. If he says that it is extended or compound, then we resort again to the preceding question, and show that such a subject, on account of its bodily extension, is incapable of experiencing different sensations simultaneously, and of comparing them together.

II. A somewhat similar argument can be drawn from the simplicity of intellectual, abstract ideas formed by the human soul, an effect that cannot be attributed to the activity of an extended, composite substance, such as, for instance, the brain. Take for an illustration the indivisible concept or idea, *truth,* and let us see whether such an idea may be the result of any activity found in that extended substance, the brain. This might happen only on one or other of these three suppositions:

1. Different parts of the same idea, *truth,* may belong to different parts of the brain;

2. Or each part of the brain may be the subject or recipient of that entire idea;

3. Or again the whole idea may pertain to one single part of the brain.

None of these three suppositions can be admitted.

Not the *first,* for the concept of truth is an indivisible thought; hence it cannot be distributed over the different parts of the composite substance, the brain, or over any aggregate of separate atoms.

Neither may we admit the *second* supposition, because if the different parts of the composite substance—the brain in our hypothesis—were each the basis or recipient of a whole complete idea, we should have at the same time not one but several ideas of the same object, a result flatly contradicted by the testimony of our inner consciousness.

The *third* and last supposition must also be rejected, for if the whole idea were located only in one part or element of the brain, we would then ask: "Is this part composite or simple?" If the latter, then our contention that the ultimate subject of thought is simple and indivisible is granted. If the former is allowed, then the whole series of impossible alternatives will re-

cur again, until our opponents are finally driven to admit our conclusion, that the human soul is simple and immaterial. This argument, like a sword sharpened on its two sides, proves at the same time both the simplicity and the spirituality of man's soul.[5]

B. *The human soul, besides being simple, is also spiritual.*

193. Spirituality expresses a good deal more than simplicity, for a being may be simple without being spiritual; such as the soul of all inferior animals, the brute creation. That substance is called spiritual, which, in many of its operations, does not depend on the concurrent action of material organs and can therefore exist, live, and act without the body.

The human soul is a spiritual substance. Among the soul's operations that are entirely independent of all material organs are reckoned those which not only do not need them, but moreover cannot be at all performed with them. Such are the following operations of the soul's intellect. In fact, it can perceive and understand such notions and ideas as possibility and impossibility, necessity and contingency, time and eternity, honesty, holiness, virtue, vice, right, wrong, beauty, turpitude, liberty, slavery, animal, rational, God, angels, etc. Moreover, it is in the region beyond the reach of sense that man works at his syllogisms, forms thoughts and judgments, solves mathematical problems and is made aware of those behests of conscience which it is in his power either to obey or resist.

Now all these notions, being confessedly immaterial, cannot be reached by a purely material, bodily organ or instrument; for the body can only reach and act on a bodily substance. There follows, then, from our reasoning, this inevitable conclusion, that the power, force, or agent capable of performing the above-mentioned intellectual operations, is entirely independent in those and similar actions of all material organs. Such power, force, or agent is man's soul. Therefore the soul of man is a spiritual being independent of matter in its intellectual and volitional acts. To attribute the foregoing operations to a material faculty would be to run counter to these two self-evident metaphysical axioms:

First: That no effect can be superior to its cause.

Secondly: That every effect must have a proportionate cause.

We must, then, admit in man a vital, immaterial, spiritual principle or cause. This is no other than his soul. It has therefore been proved that man's soul is spiritual.

The soul, then, is evidently spiritual since it forms the universal, which may be called a spiritualized essence; compares ideas; constructs judgments; and, by the process of reasoning, passes from one known truth to an unknown. It understands purely spiritual objects, reflects upon its own acts and upon itself; it seeks the spiritual even in the material, is endowed

[5] See Maher's Psychology, p. 467.

with freedom in such a way that no material object can determine or force it.

OBJECTIONS

194. To refute some of the chief objections advanced by materialists against the spirituality of the human soul, the following observations must be borne in mind:

I. We freely admit that, in spite of the progress of science and general knowledge, we have but inadequate, imperfect ideas concerning matter and the thinking faculty. But, on the other hand, we contend that enough is known on this subject to detect such contradictory properties in matter and thought, as are absolutely incompatible. In fact, matter is essentially composite and extended, and can act only on material substances, whilst the thinking faculty, being simple and unextended, requires for its subject objects that are wholly immaterial.

II. When they tell us that organic matter, possessing, as it does, such wonderful properties, might be so improved in its organization as to exercise intellectual acts, we reply that organization, however perfect, cannot change the essential constitution of matter, and transform it into a thinking subject.

First Objection: To identify the soul with the body, and to show thereby that it is a material being, it is argued thus: The soul is subject to the same changes and vicissitudes as the body. In fact, it grows, and becomes old with the growth and aging of the body.

Answer: This broad assertion cannot be admitted, as it is not quite true, for the growth of the two constituent parts of the human compound is essentially different. The body grows as to its substance by the accession of new matter, whilst the soul grows only in regard to its habits, experience, knowledge, acts, virtue, etc. In youth, when the body is quite strong and robust, the strength of mind and maturity of judgment are quite inferior to those of old age, when the body becomes weak and debilitated. The soul is often opposed to the things which prove pleasing to the body. The body may be compelled to act, but not the soul. A part of the body may be amputated; e. g., an arm or a limb, though the soul remains untouched and unimpaired.

195. The intimate experience of every one of us establishes beyond all doubt the existence in man of phenomena or effects that are sensitive and organic, as well as the presence of immaterial acts. There must therefore be two distinct principles or causes of those phenomena and acts, one material, the other spiritual.

On the other hand the testimony of experience evidently proves that these two principles are not two distinct individuals, each of them possessing an independent personality, placed in

juxtaposition and even penetrating each other, one ruling the other, as the rider controls his horse.

The real fact is that soul and body complete each other, and mutually concur, each in its own sphere, in forming one human nature; the same individual, the same identical person, that has the consciousness of seeing, of hearing, of moving, etc.—all *sensitive* acts—also perceives his *immaterial*, *spiritual*, and *intellectual* acts, such as his thoughts, his wishes, his deliberations, etc.

196. This intimate union of body and soul must necessarily produce reciprocal influences between the two constituent elements, the sensible and the spiritual. Under the impulse received from external objects, our organs react, the nervous excitation transmitted to the brain produces therein an internal image. Then it is that the intellectual faculty comes into play and forms ideas, judgments and reasonings.

197. *Second Objection:* It is argued by materialists that the intellect cannot be said to be a purely spiritual faculty, for in the exercise of its activity it essentially depends upon the body; in fact, when the latter's organism is injured, for instance, by a severe concussion of the brain, the operations of the former are interfered with, or even at times entirely prevented.

Answer: To this difficulty we answer with St. Thomas, that in such case the action of the intellect is interfered with, not *essentially* and *directly*, but only *accidentally* and *indirectly*. The operations of the intellect are not exercised through corporeal organs; hence, when such organs are vitiated, its activity is not stopped on that account. However, when some derangement occurs in the organs, or in the nervous system, and especially in the brain, the exercise of the organic faculties, such as sensibility, imagination, which depend on those organs, is naturally disturbed. Now, since the integrity of such faculties is required as a condition for the normal operations of the intellect in the present state of union of the soul with the body, for instance to supply it with suitable materials, it happens that the derangement of the organs indirectly interferes with the functions of the intellect, and it is exactly by such interference that we can account for the raving and unconnected reasoning of sick persons subject to intense fever.

So long as the soul remains united to the body, it cannot reach the knowledge of exterior things, except through the help of phantasms or ideal images of things supplied from the actions of the sensitive faculties, that are placed in contact with the external world. Hence the sayings of the schoolmen: *Nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu:* namely, Nothing is in the intellect but what has before been in the senses. *Intellectus noster nihil intelligit sine phantasmate*, that is, Our intellect understands nothing without a phantasm or image.

When, therefore, an organic faculty, such as our instruments of sensation; *e. g.* sight, hearing, the nervous and cerebral systems, etc., fail to act normally, the intellect also suffers, not on account of any intrinsic disturbance in its nature, which remains unimpaired, but for want of suitable objects or materials, which can no longer be furnished by the injured faculties of sensation. Give to a Raphael the worst canvas, pencil, and colors; or to a Canova a very inferior kind of marble, and no matter how grand their conceptions might be in their minds, they will never be able to give them an outward expression worthy of their genius; and this not on account of defective talent, but rather for want of suitable materials.

Third Objection: The intellectual faculties are found to be developed and altered with the brain, or even to disappear along with it. Therefore, they are simply functions of the brain. This is the materialists' argument as commonly stated in their works.

198. *Answer:* The facts we have alleged to show the intellectual and spiritual activity of the mind are incontestable, and asserted by all the spiritualistic schools. The discoveries of modern science in physiology, medicine, surgery, etc., have only placed in clearer light the mechanism of the organic functions, leaving untouched and unanswered all the peremptory arguments usually employed in vindicating the spiritual character and nature of the soul as opposed to materialism. So we know more in our days about the structure and convolutions of the brain, about the so-called centers of association of Flechsig, the results of trepanning, etc.

But the objection proves at most, what we freely grant, that the brain is the chief organ of the sensitive faculties, whose function is required as a condition necessary to set in motion the spiritual activity of the soul. And this condition arises from the fact of the intimate union of body and soul in the present life. What would be said of the following manner of arguing, identical with that of materialists? Vegetation, sensation cannot be produced except under certain determined conditions of air, temperature, water, light, etc., and they are altered, deteriorated or even destroyed, if those faculties or conditions are altered, deteriorated or entirely removed. Therefore, vegetation and sensation are produced by the air, the temperature, the light, etc. Would not this be to confound the *condition* with the *cause?* Thus, to bring a familiar illustration, I cannot see objects in the dark; if a light is brought in, shall I say that it is the light that sees the objects and not my eyes? By no means, for the presence of the light is not the *cause*, but only the *condition* of vision. What the light is to the eye, the brain is to the intellect. It is simply the *condition* required for the normal

action of the intellect; but it is not the *cause* of its intellectual operations.

Fourth Objection: This one single nature, consisting of two elements, one spiritual, and the other material, is something inconceivable, contradictory, absurd.

199. *Answer: (a)* Yes, it is mysterious and obscure, we grant. But, we may ask our opponents, chemical affinity, attraction, gravitation, vegetation, electricity, magnetism, the existence of ether in starry space assured by scientists, are all these things easily understood? Do they contain no mystery? Nay, there have been found scientific men, who pronounced those things as incomprehensible as the concept of a spirit, the idea of a soul. "To believe in the existence of material objects is but a convenient hypothesis," says Poincaré, in his "Mathematical Theory of Light." (Ed. 1889. Preface.)

(b) This union of soul and body and the consequent formation of one individual, one single person, do not present to our mind any absurd idea. Where is the absurdity in this that an element of a superior nature communicates to an element of inferior order some of its perfection, such as life, sensation, etc? Again, is there any absurdity in the fact that a superior principle requires for the exercise of certain faculties, the intimate concurrence of an inferior principle?

(c) After all, this union affords the only satisfactory explanation possible of experimental facts.

THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY

FIRST PROOF—TAKEN FROM ITS SPIRITUALITY

We shall successively prove:

I. That the soul is naturally immortal.

II. That, as a matter of fact, it will actually live forever.

200. I. *The soul is naturally immortal.* In fact, all spiritual beings are, by their own nature, immortal; and this must, therefore, be true of the soul, which, as we have shown, is a spiritual being.

Spiritual substances cannot suffer death or cessation of existence, as they do not contain in themselves any principle or cause of corruption or disintegration, what will evidently appear from the following reflections: A thing may be intrinsically destroyed for two reasons: either because it is composed of parts distinct from each other, which, when once disconnected or separated, cause the thing itself to perish; or because though not composed of parts, but simple, as the soul of inferior animals, it may depend, like accidents, for the continuance of its existence on something else which, being destroyed or injured, the being itself ceases to be. As the human soul is a spiritual being, it does not, like matter, consist of parts; neither is it an accident

depending upon the body for its existence, but is a subsistent being.

But perhaps the soul, once separated from the body, will not be able to act; and consequently there being no reason to justify its further existence, it will simply disappear and cease to be. No, this cannot be; for we reckon among its faculties operations which are independent of matter; it can think, it can will. We may, then, logically conclude that the soul, being naturally immortal, can survive the body; in other words, it can continue to live even when separated from it by death. True, in the present state the soul cannot think without the aid of the imagination; but the necessity of the imagination for some mental operations is easily accounted for, owing to the union of the soul with the body in the present life; but such a necessity will cease to exist when the soul is separated from its material organism. As the conditions of the soul's existence in the next life are changed, it is but natural that the conditions of its activity should likewise be different. In other words, the necessity of the work of the imagination is merely extrinsic, owing to the actual union of soul and body. This is precisely the teaching of St. Thomas, as it is seen in the following citations: P. I^a, Qu. 75, Art. 6, and Qu. 89, Art. I.

201. II. *The soul will actually survive the body.* This is easily proved, for no cause shall destroy it.

(a) No creature possesses the power of annihilating the works of the Creator. Here we invoke the authority of some of our adversaries themselves, particularly of the scientific men of our days, who lay great stress on the principle that there is no natural force capable of annihilating even one atom of matter. When, therefore, the continued existence of the spiritual soul is once established, we may assert that for a stronger reason *(a fortiori)* such a soul cannot be destroyed by any creature. We say for a stronger reason, for if material beings, which can be subjected to the action of both natural and artificial forces, cannot be reduced to nothing, the annihilation of spiritual beings will be still more impossible, as they are placed entirely beyond the reach of those forces.

202. The following consideration will lead us to the same conclusion: To annihilate a being means to subtract or remove that being from God's preservative action absolutely required for the continuance of its existence, and reduce it to nothing. But it is plain that no creature, however mighty, can act in opposition to the divine action, prevent the exercise of God's power and thus interfere with the existence of a contingent being. Therefore, no creature whatever can annihilate the human soul, and thus deprive it of its existence.

(b) God will not destroy the human soul. In the first place,

to create a soul naturally immortal in order to annihilate it involves a contradiction entirely repugnant to infinite wisdom; a contradiction, mind well, that cannot be justified. Nothingness being absolutely useless, annihilation would be an action without a purpose; whilst the soul, if immortal, can attain the last end of creation and always procure the glory of God, either by praising Him in the splendor of eternal beatitude, or by proclaiming His justice in the everlasting abyss of the reprobates. No. 71.

The several arguments against the soul's annihilation by God's power will be fully stated and developed particularly in Parts VII, VIII, and IX.

203. We can develop the preceding arguments more clearly still if we proceed by logical steps as follows:

First Question: Can the soul, when separated from the body, continue to exist and live?

Answer: It can certainly exist, for being a substance entirely distinct from the body, excluding all material components and being independent of bodily organs in its intellectual and volitional operations, it can certainly survive the corruption of the body, to which it was not simply inhering, as if it had been an accident.

It can doubtless live. Its life essentially consists in the operations of the intellect and will, and, in the state of separation, it retains both the power and the objects needed for both those spiritual functions. It has the power, for both intellect and will remain in the soul, to which they essentially belong.

Neither are suitable objects wanting, for if in the present life the most lofty, noble objects, such as Almighty God, His perfections, truth, virtue, etc., can be contemplated more and more perfectly in proportion to our abstraction from sensible things, our soul, once freed from the body, will be able to understand and contemplate those same objects so much the more easily and perfectly when free from bodily hindrances, the *gravedo* or impediment of the material organism, as St. Thomas observes. Therefore, the assertion that no activity can be exercised by the soul after its separation from the body is quite incorrect, for those activities which require no bodily organ will certainly remain. It is plain that so long as the soul is united to the body, it cannot reach the knowledge of external things except through the help of phantasms or ideal images of objects supplied from the sensitive faculties. Hence the saying of the schoolmen: "Nothing comes to the intellect but what has been before in the senses." But in the state of separation the soul will act after the manner of the angelic spirits, since the manner of acting of a being follows its mode of being or manner of existence. *Operatio sequitur esse.*

Moreover, the ideas and cognitions acquired during life, being preserved by intellectual memory, will furnish to the soul abundant matter for its mental activity.

204. As the soul in the state of separation has a new mode of existence, God, the Author of nature, through the divinely infused images or species, supplies it with what is needed for its natural operations.

The soul retains the knowledge acquired in life through the process of abstraction.

The soul knows God and itself, the angelic creatures and separate souls.

The soul, then, can exercise intellectual acts because its specific substantial entity, that is, its intelligent entity, suffered no change either in its essence or in its activities.[6]

205. The solution of the following difficulty will throw considerable light on our present subject: The brain, says the materialist, is the organ of the mind. For every act of consciousness there is presumably a corresponding physical modification. How can the mind act and the soul live when that organ is lost by death?

Addressing himself to the very root of this difficulty, namely, the absence of the brain, Professor James argues thus:

"Agreed; we accept the position, that the brain is the organ of the mind. But such a statement is susceptible of at least two altogether different interpretations. The organ may either produce that of which it is the instrument, or its function may be limited to that of transmission. In our experience, for example, electricity is associated with things like batteries, dynamos and wires. The wire is the organ of the electric current. [The argument, of course, was formulated before the days of wireless, but ethereal vibrations will answer the purpose just as well.] Without the wire there could be no manifestation of electricity. But nobody supposes that the wire produces that of which it is the transferring organ, or that the electricity ceases to exist when the wire is disconnected, or destroyed. It ceases indeed to manifest itself to us; but we know that this absence of manifestation is not identical with non-existence. And so, for all we know, it may be with mind. Its manifestation to us is dependent upon the normal, efficient functioning of those particular items in consciousness, which we call the brain and nervous system. But nothing in our experience, scientific or otherwise, entitles us to say that the mind could not exist apart from its organs, or that it might not, under other conditions, and to other conscious agents be manifested through some agency of different nature adapted to its new mode of existence. Nor is it yet, by any means, demonstrated that the connection between brain and

6 St. Thomas De Anima, Disp. 8, and De Veritate, Qu. xix.

mind is of a nature of a complete parallelism, as if neither of them could exist independently of the other. One must therefore dismiss the materialistic denial of immortality as a piece of dogmatism, unsupported by logical reasons."[7] (See nn. **197, 198.**)

"Telegraphic communications cannot, as every one knows, be established without a simultaneous chemical process in the battery. But the message delivered by the wire, the contents of the telegram, can by no means be regarded as a function of this electro-chemical process. This holds with still greater force of the relation of thought to the brain. The brain is not the soul, but only the instrument of the soul. And the soul, not coming within the reach of sense-perception, is not an object of investigation for physics or anatomy. Thought, subjectively accurate, is also objectively true. Were it not for this inalterable harmony, pre-established by God, between subject and object, all our thinking would necessarily be without fruit."[8]

206. *Second Question:* Can man's soul be deprived of its existence by any created agent?

Answer: We give to this question an emphatic negative reply, for it is proved in philosophy that the same omnipotent power that is required for creation is also needed for annihilation, a truth admitted also by modern scientists. But let us suppose, for argument's sake, that there should exist some created being capable of reducing the human soul to nothing. Will it be possible for it to exercise that power? No, by no means. Because no secondary cause, such as a creature, can act without the concurrence of God, the primary cause. God having so made the soul of man that it is destined to last forever, no created agent can destroy it, for no creature can frustrate and impede the designs of the Creator. (See n. **202.**)

207. *Third Question:* Will God ever exercise the power of annihilating the human soul?

Answer: Here again we give a negative answer. That Almighty God possesses the absolute power of bringing to nothing whatever He created, no one can deny. But here a most important distinction is to be held in mind. The power is one thing, but its actual exercise is quite another. When we speak of God's omnipotence, His power to do all things, we must take into account His other attributes, such as His wisdom and justice, and remember this principle of sound philosophy, that Almighty God will never exercise an attribute, such as omnipotence, unless such an act be in perfect harmony with His other attributes of wisdom, justice, holiness, etc.

[7] Criticisms of Life, by Horace J. Bridges. Evidence of Immortality, p. 127.

[8] Robert Mayer, in Kneller's book, p. 18.

Should God decide to annihilate the human soul, it is certain that He would not do so without a motive or reason worthy of His infinite wisdom and justice. Let our opponents assign some such motive, if they can. They have none. We show on the contrary that most wise and just reasons require the permanent existence of man's soul in a future world. As several such reasons have already been alleged and developed in the preceding part of our work, when we proved the necessity of a perfect, eternal sanction of God's laws, we will here simply give a few additional remarks.

First: Human reason affirms that in God's sight the condition of a man, who breaks the divine law, cannot be the same as that of him who faithfully observes it. But were this the only life, both the just and the wicked would finally meet with the same lot, annihilation. This result would be irreconcilable with the providence of a just, equitable, wise God.

208. Moreover, God will not annihilate any of the blessed souls admitted to heaven, because their annihilation would be an act directly contrary to justice, as it would deprive such a soul of the reward merited by its fidelity and loyalty to God, for whose sake it subdued and conquered its inordinate desires in order to avoid the divine offense and obey His holy law.

Secondly: If such arbitrary annihilation should not be predicted and known, the annihilated soul would be the victim of a huge, cruel deception, which is absolutely impossible in a God of infinite goodness and veracity.

Neither will God annihilate any of the reprobate souls, and thus deliver them from endless suffering: an infliction due to impenitent sinners for many reasons, of which we here only recall the following two, as others, not less cogent, will be discussed in Parts VIII and IX:

First: Because in sin, as St. Thomas argues, it is the will of man that acts against God, not his human nature, which of itself tends to the observance of the moral order, which He has established. Therefore the punishment must chastise the real culprit, the will, whilst afflicting the human nature abused by the will in the commission of sin. Now if the creature were to be reduced to nothing, only the nature of man would be punished by annihilation, and not his guilty, rebellious will.

Secondly: It belonged to God's most wise providence to furnish to men a motive amply sufficient to restrain them from evil doings and induce them to the observance of His law, even when confronted by the most alluring temptations. Such a motive is actually supplied by the terrible, punitive, eternal retribution threatened to the impenitent sinners in the next world. But should there exist any hope or probability that

some of the damned souls will be annihilated, the fear of eternal punishment would lose much of its efficacy, as many reckless sinners would put no bounds to their wickedness and impiety, encouraged by the hope that their soul might finally be destroyed and all punishment escaped.

SECOND PROOF—TAKEN FROM MAN'S TENDENCY TOWARD PERFECT HAPPINESS

209. We reason as follows:

I. Man naturally aspires toward perfect happiness—a tendency imparted to him by the Creator.

II. Therefore he is destined to enjoy it.

III. Now, perfect happiness supposes and requires immortality.

Therefore the soul of man is immortal.

To prove the legitimacy of our conclusion, we must establish the truth of each of the three foregoing propositions.

I. *Man naturally aspires to perfect happiness.*[9]

(a) Reality of this aspiration. Man wishes to be happy, and perfectly happy. Doubtless he often deceives himself; he strives to seize phantoms that vanish before his eyes; he eagerly approaches to his lips enticing but poisoned fruits; he passionately craves after gratifications that will be the cause of his misery; in a fit of despair he may even put an end to his life; yet, in all the vicissitudes of his restless career, what always impels him to act, what is at the bottom of all of his wishes and his vexations and spites, is the desire of happiness, and perfect happiness. So long as this need of his heart is not fully gratified, he is a disappointed man, and endeavors to seek with still greater greed what may completely satisfy him.

(b) This aspiration is natural. The capital point here is to understand well that this tendency toward perfect happiness is not an accidental, casual, irrelevant phenomenon, but an integral part of the inner nature of man. Let us observe its characteristic properties.

210. What an astounding difference between that tendency and the thousand particular desires springing up from the human heart! (1) These vary, succeed, and at times replace each other, whilst man's aspiration toward perfect happiness remains unchangeable and indestructible. (2) Particular desires differ with different individuals; whilst the tendency toward perfect happiness is invariably the same in all men. (3) Particular desires refer to the means leading to happiness; but the natural aspiration, we speak of, aims at perfect happiness itself as its end. (4) Lastly, the particular desires themselves rest on perfect happiness, as their ultimate foundation and cause.

[9] See Chapters IV and V of Part I.

And if we were to inquire from ourselves what are the motives of our desires, of our actions, of our aspirations, the true answer and last reason would be: "I seek what is good for me; I wish to be happy."

It is evident, then, that a tendency combining in itself such characteristic marks; a tendency that is the beginning and cause of all others, is, strictly speaking, a natural tendency. Hence follows the inevitable conclusion.

II. *Man is destined to enjoy perfect happiness.*

211. This irresistible tendency of human nature cannot certainly be an illusion; namely, an aspiration to hopes that can never be realized. Hence we may without rashness formulate the following dilemna: Either the wisdom and goodness of God are at fault, or man is really destined to enjoy perfect happiness. In fact: *(a)* To create a being which is, by its own nature, irresistibly impelled toward a definite end, and then to make it impossible for it to attain it, would be a sad contradiction, altogether incompatible with divine wisdom. *(b)* To frustrate man's most ardent desires, to refuse to satiate the most irresistible aspirations of his nature, would be inflicting upon him the torture of Tantalus, and all this without sufficient, plausible reason, and without fault on the part of man. Would this be reconcilable with God's infinite goodness? Therefore man is created for perfect happiness, and is furnished with the means necessary to enable him to reach and enjoy it. But, we may be asked, where is this perfect happiness to be found, in this world, or in the next? Certainly not here below, for reason, revelation and the experience of six thousand years, the most probable period of man's existence upon earth, unite their voices in proclaiming that perfect happiness cannot be found in the present life. Our logical reasoning, then, justifies us in making a further stop and concluding that man's soul is immortal and that perfect and ever-enduring happiness is reserved to the just in the life to come. (See Part I, Ch. IV.)

III. *There can be no perfect happiness without immortality, that is, endless duration.*

212. Not only do we desire to be happy in one way or another, but we wish to be perfectly happy. Our intellect craves after infinite truth; our will yearns after infinite good. Hence to constitute perfect happiness, a state of life embracing the enjoyment of all goods, three things or conditions are absolutely required:

1. The exclusion of all evils.
2. The possession of every good conformable to our nature.
3. Complete security of never losing such happiness, which last condition is the most essential of all; for if there should be no certainty of the everlasting duration of that happiness, the mere thought of the future loss of heavenly bliss would be suffi-

cient not only to exclude all happiness, but also to cause the most intense grief, a grief proportionate to the immense loss to be incurred. Now, if we deny the immortality of the soul, the three conditions required for perfect happiness would at once disappear. For, first, instead of excluding every evil, one of the greatest evils would be substituted: namely, the cessation of existence. Secondly, to the possession of all goods would succeed the anticipation of their total loss in some future time. Thirdly, the complete security of never losing the enjoyment of happiness would be replaced by the certainty of plunging sooner or later into the abyss of nothing. The preceding argumentation may be thus briefly summarized:

The soul of man is immortal, if it can be proved: First, that it can exist, live, and act after its separation from the body. Secondly, that it cannot be annihilated by any creature. Thirdly, that it will not be annihilated by God, its Creator. As the three preceding propositions have been proved, we may logically conclude that the soul of man is immortal.

The immortality of the human soul is in perfect harmony with divine justice and wisdom. For whilst, on the one hand, the sure prospect of an interminable, happy life presents to the just a cheering prospect, acting as a motive amply sufficient to enable them, with the help of divine grace, to curb the most violent passions, and persevere to the end in the practice of Christian virtue; on the other hand, the divine threat of an endless retribution beyond the grave offers to the wicked a most potent restraint, capable of deterring them from sin.

213. In conclusion, if we except materialists and infidels, who deny the immortality of the soul, not from any personal conviction of the truth of their tenets, but simply because they endeavor by their denial to remove all moral check and restraint from sin, we know it to be a historical fact that men of all ages and countries, whether civilized or barbarian, unite their voices in proclaiming to mankind this lofty truth, the endless existence of man's soul beyond the tomb. Here it is highly important to remark that the natural aspirations of human reason are fully confirmed by the teachings of Christian faith. Let the reader recall what has been said in the two preceding parts and he will at once realize the grand, sublime, most consoling truth that God Almighty, through an effusion of His infinite goodness, has actually destined man to a perfect, infinite, eternal happiness in the world to come.

THIRD PROOF—TAKEN FROM THE EXISTENCE OF MORAL LAW

Preliminary Remark

214. Ethical or moral science proves:

(1) That there exists a rule of our free acts, a moral law, of which God alone is the Author.

(2) The existence of this law supposes the fact of the liberty and spirituality of the human soul, without which all moral law would be meaningless.

When these premises are once admitted, we can infer that this same moral law imperatively demands the immortality of the human soul.

This is our argument: The moral law, to be worthy of the name, must impose an obligation, or a duty, binding man's conscience, and be provided with a sanction capable of enforcing its execution. Now, if we do away with this truth, the immortality of the soul, neither obligation nor sanction will be any longer possible. Therefore the existence of the moral law inevitably implies the immortality of the human soul.

(a) Our first assertion in the foregoing argument is self-evident. For what kind of a law is that which every one may violate with impunity? What will the moral law amount to if it has no binding force? Now, an obligation that is not furnished with a sanction is illusory; hence the necessity of a sanction that should be efficacious; i. e., capable of enforcing the execution of the law, though man, abusing the gift of his liberty, may, in spite of it, transgress God's commands. By so doing he assumes the awful responsibility of his rebellion against divine law, and consequently will not be able to blame any one but himself for the forfeiture of heavenly happiness and the justly merited infliction of everlasting punishment.

(b) Without immortality no moral obligation is possible.

We have explained above what is meant by moral obligation, and what is its necessity. That a human act may present itself to our mind as something morally necessary and binding our conscience, it must offer to us a good of such excellence, that we cannot afford to renounce it, if we intend to secure the attainment of our highest happiness in the life to come. Now there is only one good that is capable of realizing those conditions, and that is perfect good; good without any mixture of evil. In fact, all the goods containing some imperfections, and such are all the goods that may be found in the present life, leave man's will perfectly free either to accept them or reject them; in other words, they are indifferent. Therefore, perfect good, the only one that can constitute the basis of moral obligation, is to be found only in the future life. This good, this happiness of the next world, consisting in the possession of God, would be a veritable punishment, if it should finally end. The conclusion, then, that logically follows from the preceding premises is that the obligation of the moral law supposes the immortality of the soul of man.

(c) Without immortality there cannot be an efficacious sanction.

215. Where is such a sanction to be found here below? Is vir-

tue fully rewarded? Do we not see that vice often triumphs with impunity? This sad spectacle, which is frequently a cause of scandal to unreflecting minds, when properly considered, is found, on the contrary, to be a clear indication of the justice that shall be rendered to every one according to his works.

It is in effect impossible to suppose that a God infinitely just and good should not deal with His rational, responsible creatures according to their deeds, whether good or evil. To admit the inference of the materialists, allowing the wicked to sin with impunity, without fear of punishment to come, would be in God an action opposed to His infinite justice, which requires that He should either reward or punish men according to their deserts. Therefore the human soul must survive the body after death. Hence it is right for us to conclude that the existence of the moral law, and of its sanction requires that man's soul should outlive the body, and, as proved by other arguments, possess an endless existence.

216. As a fitting conclusion to our demonstration, we subjoin the following considerations condensed from Msgr. Vaughan's able article, entitled "Man or Ape":[10]

"No one denies the animal nature of man's body. No! It is not that which we have in view when we extol his grandeur and nobility. It is rather the great and immortal principle that animates that body—that stirs in every limb, that throbs in the overburdened heart; that immortal essence, which looks out of its prison home and, gazing beyond this puny earth, measures the distance and magnitude of the stars, traces their paths through sidereal space, and compels the powers of nature to serve its purpose and to do its bidding. Yes, it is this active, energetic, secret principle of life, of thought, of love, that we have in our mind, when we think of man's greatness, not the corruptible vesture of vile clay, with which it is temporarily encumbered, and which may be thrown away to-morrow, and made to feast the worms in the lonely grave. The glory and dignity of man lies not in his body, however comely and beautiful; preëminence is due to the marvelous intellectual principle to which we give the name 'soul.' It is the gifts inherent in the soul, above all the gift of immortality, that raises man up and sets him on a pinnacle above the rest of the visible creation. Yes, man's soul is immortal. Once produced by the omnipotence of God, it must endure forever. Hence as to the past, we are creatures of yesterday. As to the future, we are everlasting. As delicious music to the ear, so is this thought of our endless duration to the heart of the way-worn pilgrim of earth. We are children of eternity, not of time. Such a truth is not only most consoling, but it is one which must, when realized, exercise a most beneficial influence on the tenor of our lives. It is in the future, end-

[10] See Faith and Folly, p. 412.

less existence that, as Christian faith assures us, our mental capacities will receive their full development, and all our aspirations will be completely gratified. The infinitely wise and beneficent Creator, who has filled our heart with most ardent yearnings after an eternal life of light, happiness, and love, has made ample provision for their realization. Shall we dare affirm that God, who plants the irresistible desire of ever-enduring bliss in our souls, plants it here in mockery and derision? A thousand times no. It is as certain as we live that, if He has so constituted our nature, that it clamors for the eternal joys of heaven, it is simply because He intends to stay the cry He has raised and to grant us one day the desire of our heart." Only one condition does the Lord require on our part and that is the fulfilment of His holy will, the observance of the divine commands: a condition supremely reasonable and just, as shown in Part I.

CHAPTER III

ILLUMINATING POINTS OF DOCTRINE, OR REMARKS AVAILABLE FOR THE SOLUTION OF DIFFICULTIES AGAINST THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY

To solve difficulties against the soul's immortality, the following remarks should be borne in mind.

REMARK I

217. It is only natural and, therefore, general, common aspirations to perfect, lasting happiness that can claim a divine origin and are to be conditionally satisfied.

It is granted that there may be in man desires, which, for some reason or other, cannot always be satisfied, such as the desire of some temporal good. But these desires do not concern things due to man or needed for his perfection; hence their realization, when it can be obtained, may be renounced, as is done by virtuous men for the sake of mortification and self-denial. Moreover, in the chapter referring to man's craving for happiness, we speak of desires and tendencies to happiness in general, and not to some particular good, which individuals may wish to secure. We refer therefore to aspirations that possess these two chief characteristics. First, it is question here of a universal tendency found in every human soul. Secondly, it is an irresistible tendency, the mainspring and motive of all human actions. Man, aiming at Christian perfection, may spontaneously renounce the possession and enjoyment of some particular goods legitimate in themselves, to which human nature is inclined. But it would be a self-deception for any man to assert: "I would be satisfied with a moderate amount of happiness. I feel no desire for per-

fect felicity." Hence it is only aspirations to and desires of perfect, ever-enduring happiness that can claim a divine origin, and which God is pledged to satisfy, on the condition to be stated in the next remark.

REMARK II

218. In accordance with the designs of God's wisdom and justice the attainment of heavenly happiness is not absolute but conditional on man's free submission to the Creator's holy will.

When we assert that man naturally aspires to happiness, we do not mean to say that every man will finally and necessarily be happy. But we do mean that he can ultimately be happy, if he is willing to do what is required on his part during the period of time allotted by God for his probation, according to St. Paul's words: "He that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully."[1] On this account the attainment of heavenly happiness is not absolute, but conditional; if it is not attained, it is certainly always attainable. If men fail to do their duty—that is, to carry out God's will—and die impenitent, they, of their own accord, sign their own condemnation and place themselves in a state, which can no longer be changed.

REMARK III

219. The human soul can subsist, live, and act independently of the body.

The soul begins to exist in the body, not because it cannot exist without it, but because the body is to be its home, the instrument of its sensitive operations and because, as St. Thomas says, it gets its individuality from the body, of which it is the substantial form; but being naturally incorruptible, it possesses an independent subsistence and consequently can live and act whether united to the body or separated from it.

REMARK IV

220. Man's immortality, like that of angels, is a participated, not an essential, power of endless life.

That the human soul should be capable of an endless existence is indeed a marvelous thing, and we might say, an infinite gift. But this is evidently the effect of God's immense bounty and omnipotence, without whose preserving providence and concurrence no creature can continue to exist and act for any instant of time. A receptive or participated power of endless life is one thing, but an essential, independent and eternal existence is quite another. The former belongs to spiritual creatures, such as angels and human souls; the latter is proper of God alone. (See n. **189**.)

As theologians pertinently observe, when some of the Fathers

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 5.

state in their writings that the human soul's persevering existence depends on the will of God, they simply mean to assert the fact that they continue to live because He preserves their life, as He does that of all other creatures. But they did not mean to deny the truth known both by reason and divine revelation, that man's soul is naturally immortal.

REMARK V

221. What kind of reunion with its former body does the departed soul naturally desire?

Some writers speak of the tendency of the body to reunite with the soul, and of the soul's tendency to reunite with the body. Thence some wrongly conclude, as the body perishes when separated from the soul, so the soul, in its turn, ceases to exist when death separates it from its natural companion, the body. That the body may have a natural fitness, called by theologians *potentia passiva,* for reunion with the soul, we grant, but that in a purely material, dead organism, there may be tendencies, aspirations, yearnings of any kind, we deny, for such inclinations are exclusively proper to simple and spiritual living substances. We may also deny in the separated soul a tendency, desire, anxiety for reunion with a corruptible body, which had proved, in the state of union, a kind of hindrance to the operations of the intellect and the will, and from which it must eventually be again separated. But we fully admit a natural aptitude and ardent desire of the soul to be reunited with the body, no longer corruptible and perishable, but glorified and immortal, according to what we learn from divine revelation. Hence, St. Paul writes: "Waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body." [2] "We also, who are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burthened; . . . that that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life." [3]

The reader is here referred to a subsequent chapter in Part IV where this matter is discussed at greater length.[4]

REMARK VI

222. Full justice is dealt both to the just and to the wicked, but only in the world to come.

Almighty God, as a most wise Legislator, and just Judge, will not fail to reward the observers and to punish the transgressors of His laws, a retribution that cannot be fully allotted in the present life. Nay, we often witness here below that the contrary generally occurs, for the just are at times compelled to endure great sufferings, while the wicked enjoy with impunity the pleasing things they secure by their criminal acts and the persecution of the good. Human life is a colossal enigma without im-

[2] Rom. viii. 23.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 4.
[4] See Lessius, Opuscula, vol. iii, pp. 34 et sqq.

mortality. The admission of a future life alone can explain man's present troubles and solve his mysteries. Bad men may rise to the highest pinnacle of prosperity whilst the good are forced to the wall. Tyrants dwell and feast in marble palaces, whilst heroes, the victims of their cruelty, starve in dungeons. Often vice wears purple and fine linen and banquets every day: and virtue eats crusts and dons rags. Tiberius flung his victims over the precipice into the sea; Nero lighted up his gardens with blazing martyrs. The conclusion, then, is inevitable; the accounts must be evenly balanced, and full justice dealt both to the just and the wicked; and as this is not done in the present life, it must be done in the next. Hence the inspired writer speaks thus: "I saw under the sun in the place of judgment wickedness, and in the place of justice iniquity. And I said in my heart: God shall judge both the just and the wicked."[5] An infidel of last century having met an old hermit, emaciated by long penance, sneeringly said to him: "Foolish old man, what will become of all your penances, if there is no heaven?" The holy hermit promptly answered the flippant infidel, whom he knew quite well: "And what will become of your atheism and debaucheries, if there is a hell?" There is a pointed rebuke administered by faith to unbelief.

REMARK VII

223. Postulate a just judge ruling mankind, and the soul's immortality follows as a logical consequence.

To a Presbyterian minister, who had delivered a course of lectures on the Immortality of the Soul, one of his clever parishioners said: "Postulate a just judge ruling mankind, and the soul's immortality follows; remember this and you will be much shorter next time in treating this subject." Rousseau reasons thus in his *Emile:* "I believe in God as fully as I believe in any other truth. If God exists He is perfect. If He is perfect, He is wise and just; if just, my soul is immortal."[6] The moral argument here referred to and discussed elsewhere in this work at greater length proves this much, that the attribute of divine justice requires that the soul should survive the body and receive in the next life a just retribution for its deeds, good or evil. That this retribution should be endless has been demonstrated in other parts of this work.

REMARK VIII

224. Future punitive endless retribution is the only motive strong enough to deter men from iniquitous deeds, without tampering with their liberty.

[5] Eccles. iii. 16, 17.

[6] Quoted by Professor Caird in his Literature and Philosophy, vol. i, p. 132.

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We may urge and strengthen the preceding argument by the following reflections. God, the Supreme Provisor and Author of the moral order governing the human race, must, no doubt, have disposed that man should always have at hand a motive sufficient to keep him in the path of duty, notwithstanding the enticing allurements inducing him to the violation of the divine commands. This He has done by the remunerative and punitive sanction assigned to His laws. Now, take away the conviction deeply rooted in the human conscience of a future, endless recompense promised to virtue and of an eternal punishment threatened to sinners, and no other motive remains strong enough to deter the wicked from criminal deeds and sinful gratifications. Can we believe that the generality of men will be prepared to conquer themselves and persevere in a career of honesty and integrity if they are once persuaded that there is nothing in store for them at the end of this earthly existence, because their soul is destined to perish along with their body? We shall expect in vain that any man, beset as he is by inordinate passions, will resolve to lead an honest life, unless he be a firm believer in the existence of God as a supreme Judge, and in the immortality of the soul accountable to Him for its doings upon earth. No sooner do men strive to convince themselves that death ends all than they abandon themselves to sensual debaucheries and fear neither God nor man. St. Augustine frankly says in His famous *Confessions:* "Had I not believed in the existence of a forthcoming retribution, Epicurus, who rejects it, would have got the better of me." The Royal Prophet, after saying of the atheist, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," tells in the next verse what is the consequence of unbelief. "They are corrupt, and are become abominable in their ways."[7]

And, speaking of the sinner who entirely neglects to think of God's presence, the same Royal Psalmist says: "God is not before his eyes; his ways are filthy at all times."[8]

REMARK IX

225. The denial of eternal punishment cannot be reconciled with the attribute of divine justice.

If there were no future life, the present world would be bristling with contradictions, absurdities, and injustices, highly derogatory to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God's providence, by which we are governed. As the distinguished author James Balmes writes: "The abolition of future punishment cannot be reconciled with divine justice. Do we not behold in this world iniquity haughty and triumphant? Do we not find infamous seducers, veritable brutes in human form, who, after corrupting the innocence of many youths, cruelly desert the victims of their lust, and abandon them to all the horrors of

[7] Ps. xiii. 1. [8] Ps. ix. 5 (according to the Hebrew canon).

ignominy and desperation? Shall perfidy, treason, fraud, adultery, and other criminal enormities, after eluding the vigilance of human justice, also escape the judgment of an avenging, omnipotent God?" It is well here to recall the words of the heroic Eleazar recorded in the Second Book of the Machabees: "Yet I should not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead."[9]

"It is impossible to escape Thy hand."[10] "There is none that can deliver out of Thy hand."[11]

REMARK X

226. The main question at issue is: Has Almighty God, infinitely just, really threatened impenitent sinners with eternal reprobation? If He has, as it has been proved above, what does it matter if some difficulty is experienced in comprehending it?

Catholic doctrines form a whole perfectly consistent and harmonious system, in which there is such reciprocal dependence in all the truths, that one cannot be rejected without rejecting all. We may here apply what the Apostle St. James says of the transgression of one of God's commandments: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all."[12] For all the precepts of the law are to be considered as one total and entire law, and, as it were, a chain of precepts, where, by breaking one link, the whole chain is severed, and the transgressor despises the lawgiver. Hence if some capital doctrinal points are admitted, such as the perfection, wisdom and justice of the Deity, it is impossible to reject the rest.

227. Now how do the impugners of Christian dogmas act? They select one or other of those tenets for attack, completely isolating it from the others, and then jump to the conclusion that a religion which teaches such and such a doctrine cannot be true. We would ask them how they manage to reconcile this conclusion with the fact that the same religion, which teaches the existence and eternity of hell, bears on its face all the characters of divine truth, and is proved by irrefutable arguments to have God for its Author, and the world's Redeemer for its Founder? Or the question might be thus presented to our opponents: The voice of reason teaches that among the attributes proper to the Deity we must reckon infinite wisdom, goodness, and justice; and divine revelation, which the same human reason proves to be an authentic and reliable record of God's dealings with His rational creatures, tells us in the clearest language, that God, infinitely wise, good, and just, has established a double sanction to enforce the execution of His law; namely, the promise of eternal happiness to its observers, and the threat of eternal punishment to its transgressors. When these principles are fully demonstrated, what matters it whether the dogma of future, interminable retri-

[9] 2 Mach vi. 26. [10] Wis. xvi. 15. [11] Job x. 7. [12] James ii. 10.

bution presents some difficulty to our feeble minds? Therefore, the main question at issue is, has Almighty God, infinitely just, really and truly revealed this terrific truth? If He has, what does it matter if our reason be more or less humbled by its inability fully to comprehend it? This is the logical order of ideas and the reasonable, common-sense way of looking at dogmas which have been revealed, though we may not fully grasp the motives or reasons of the truths they convey. As Pascal remarks in his *Pensées,* [page 58], "The soul's immortality, and its consequent retribution in the next world is a truth so supremely important that one must have lost the use of reason if he remain indifferent about what most deeply concerns him." All our thoughts and actions, as shown in the introduction, are naturally shaped according to our admission or denial of it. It is the extreme importance of this momentous truth that arouses the anger and opposition of unbelievers, for reasons utterly discreditable to their moral character. In fact, the solemn obligation which it imposes of conforming our actions to that belief excites against it the fierce hostility of those who recognize no other rule of life but their own disordered will, bent on the gratification of their passions. To get rid of a doctrine which interferes with the indulgence of their criminal pleasures they shelter themselves under the deceptive security of their unbelief, foolishly thinking that in order not to be annoyed by the thought of future punishment it is enough to imagine that it does not exist.

228. We may say, in conclusion, either the divine command of shunning evil and doing good is destitute of all sanction, or its sanction is limited to the present life, or, as Christendom believes, it is reserved to a future, endless life. Of these three suppositions the first is manifestly repugnant to the divine attributes of wisdom and justice. The second is flatly contradicted by experience. There remains, therefore, only the third, which is in full harmony with God's infinite wisdom and justice, commends itself to human reason, and is confirmed by the general consent of men, as shall be shown later on.

REMARK XI

229. As no efficient sanction of God's laws is found in this world, He must have provided one in the next.

It is contrary to wisdom to wish for an end without providing the means. God wills that men, His creatures, should do what is right and shun what is wrong. "Decline from evil and do good."[13] Such is the divine command. Wisdom must then provide what is needed to secure its observance by furnishing to man a powerful and ever-present motive for shunning evil and doing good. Such motives are reduced to two; hope and fear; that is, hope for happiness, the reward of virtue, fear

[13] Ps. xxxvi. 27.

of misery, the penalty of sin. Now, since such a sanction is looked for in vain in the present life, it must therefore be found in the next. (See nn. **164**, **168.**)

REMARK XII

230. If all the happiness within man's reach is confined to the present life, divine wisdom, goodness, and providence are evidently at fault.

In fact, what other motive is left sufficiently strong to induce him to submit to the sacrifices, which the practice of virtue demands? If all the goods to be hoped for are those of the present life, man's principal concern will be to secure them by every means in his power; and, as vice frequently offers more attractions than virtue, on many occasions he will find far greater advantages in doing evil than in practising good, as far at least as his carnal tendencies are concerned. If such was the order established by God's providence, His infinite wisdom would contradict itself, for it would impose on man the observance of the divine commands, and, at the same time, it would furnish no sufficient help to prevent its transgression. Such a reflection is perfectly conformable to the saying of St. Paul: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."[14] For, after having, for Christ's sake, renounced the delights of earth, we shall miss, according to our opponents, likewise those of heaven.

REMARK XIII

231. Exclude future life, and you will be logically forced to admit that the martyrs and their persecutors will, after death, meet with the same fate; a conclusion supremely derogatory to the infinite justice of God.

Take the case of martyrdom. Those that underwent it are counted by the millions. Is it in keeping with the goodness of the Creator that this most perfect act of loyalty of His creatures should go unrewarded?[15] If so heroic an act fails to secure future happiness and bliss, man can hope for no forthcoming reward, however great may be his sacrifices. To this absurd conclusion we are inevitably led by the unbelievers' denial of retribution in the world to come. Is it just for a superior who has issued orders to his subjects to grant equal treatment to those who break them as to those who observe them? Now this is exactly the flagrant injustice imputed to God by those who hold that He has limited man's existence to the present life. In the supposition of our opponents, human existence would, in many cases, be a fatal gift; sufferings would remain without compensation, victorious combats against unruly passions would cease to be crowned, labors would have no recompense worth toiling for, and sorrows would be bereft of all hope and consolation.

[14] 1 Cor. xv. 19. [15] John xv. 13.

These are only a few of the evil consequences that logically follow from the system of denial of future life.

REMARK XIV

232. Striking testimony of the Greek philosopher Plato to the truth of future retribution, and of the different lots assigned by the Supreme Judge to the departed souls according to their deserts.

The ancient tradition concerning the existence of a life to come and the different lots assigned to the departed souls is thus attested by the renowned Greek sage Plato, in his work, *De Legibus*, p. 456; and in his *Phaedo*, (p. 89. n. 62. Paris edition of Firmin–Didot.) "He that reigns over us, seeing that human actions performed by the living souls are either good or evil, has prepared different abodes according to their deeds, thus leaving to our own will the free choice of our future dwelling-place. Hence the souls, departing from this world, carry with themselves what is to determine the destination due to them. Those that have committed light faults do not descend as low as the more guilty ones into the place of punishment. Those that have committed some grievous crimes are precipitated into the abyss, which is called Tartarus, from which they shall never come out: the place feared by all and which terrifies men even in their sleep. But the soul that, by continuous efforts of the will, progresses in virtue and refrains from vice, is transported to a mansion blissful in proportion to its approach to God's perfection. Young man, such is the judgment of the gods, that dwell in the heavens; the gods, who, you imagine, are not concerned about yourself. The good will be associated with the souls of the good, and the bad with those of the wicked. Each soul will join those that resemble it, either to rejoice or to suffer with them, according to their deserts. Let neither yourself nor any other think of escaping such judgment of the gods, whether you will hide yourself into the depths of the earth, or soar up into the heights of the heavens, the punishment you have deserved will overtake you either here below, or in the lower regions, in the dreadful dungeon of hell."

CHAPTER IV

ANSWERS TO SEVERAL OBJECTIONS

OBJECTION I

233. If the soul were immortal, men would not fear death, but they would rather desire it, as a passage to an interminable happy life. But all men fear death and do their utmost to

avoid it. Therefore is it not true that the instinct of nature tells us that our soul is not immortal?

Answer: This very fear of death furnishes an additional proof of the immortality of the soul; for, as experience teaches, the dread of death is felt most keenly by those, who, having led a wicked, impious life, are frightened at the thought of God's avenging justice awaiting them in a future world. See in encyclopedias the account of the frightful death of the American rationalist, Tom Paine; and of the French antichristian blasphemer, Voltaire. The latter's death in horrible despair is testified to by an eye-witness, his Protestant physician.[1] And if even the just are not entirely exempt from some fear at the moment of their departure from this life, this fear does not spring from any apprehension, lest the soul, when separated from the body, should cease to exist, but chiefly from the two following causes:

(a) From the natural repugnance which the soul experiences in being violently separated from the body, with which it is naturally destined to remain united so as to form the integral compound constituting man. And this fact simply proves how conformable to this natural tendency of the soul is the revealed dogma of the final resurrection, when the union of soul and body, temporarily interrupted by death, will again be realized at the end of time, and shall endure forever. Then the Redeemer's words, registered in St. John's Gospel, will be completely fulfilled: "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God.—And they that have done good things shall come forth into the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."[2]

(b) The fear of death arises also from the anxiety of the future lot that awaits us in eternity; for, no man, however pure his conscience, can, without a special revelation from God, know for certain where his future eternal abode will be; though he may form very probable conjectures concerning it, which conjectures are amply sufficient to check any excessive fear and to enable him to meet death with courage and resignation.

In this connection a quotation from Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes seems quite appropriate:

"So far as I have observed persons nearing the end of life, the Roman Catholics understand the business of dying better than Protestants. They have an expert with them, armed with spiritual specifics, in which they both, patient and priestly ministrant, place implicit trust. Confession, the Eucharist, Extreme Unction—these all inspire a confidence which, without this symbolism, is too apt to be wanting in over-sensitive natures. To exorcise ghastly images that sometimes disturb the afflicted intelligence, the old Church of Christendom has her mystic formulas, of which no rationalistic prescription can take the place. If

[1] See Herder's Kirchenlexicon, vol. xii, p. 1086. [2] John v. 28, 29.

Cowper had been a good Catholic, instead of having his conscience handled by a Protestant like John Newton, he would not have died despairing, looking upon himself as a castaway.

"I have seen a good many Roman Catholics on their dying beds, and it always appeared to me that they accept the inevitable with a composure which showed that their belief, whether or not the best to live by, was a better one to die by than most of the harder creeds which replaced it."

OBJECTION II

234. The end of the human soul is to animate the body; but at death this end ceases; for the body is no longer fit for life. Therefore, the soul also must cease to exist, since its existence would then be useless.

Answer: We reply that the existence of the human soul has, at least, two ends; one is proximate and inadequate and partakes of the nature of a means; the other is final and adequate. We grant that the first of these ends, which is the temporary animation of the body in this life, ceases with death; though, as we learn from divine revelation, this separation is to last only till the day of final resurrection; but we deny that the other, namely, the final and chief end of the human soul, ceases at the moment of death. For its final and chief end, as manifested by its faculties, desires, tendencies, and operations, and particularly by God's designs, is the glorification of the Creator—an end which He will infallibly obtain whatever may be man's conduct in the present life, a truth fully established in the two preceding parts of our book. (See n. **71.**)

As to the soul of brutes, we may with truth say that its chief and ultimate end is the animation of the body in this life; for, as they are destitute of intelligence and liberty—and, therefore, incapable of merit or demerit—they cannot have been created for any other end than that which is attainable in this life, where they serve the purpose of glorifying God by their existence, their faculties, and their usefulness to man, for whose benefit they were made.

OBJECTION III

235. The immortality of the human soul may be known by revelation, but it cannot be proved by reason; in fact, the immortality of the soul depends on the will of the Creator: but we cannot by reason alone know what that will is, as we cannot tell the secret desires or will of any human being, as long as they are not outwardly manifested to us.

Answer: The gentile philosophers, such as Plato, Seneca, Socrates, Plutarch, Cicero, as they themselves testify, were certainly acquainted with the truths of primitive revelation possessed by the nations of antiquity, one of which truths was the soul's survival after death. This is quite true; but, as we learn

from their philosophical works still extant, they established that same truth, the soul's immortality, by arguments exclusively derived from reason, just as is done by modern philosophers though enlightened by the brighter revelation of Christ's Gospel. A full discussion on primitive traditional revelation will be found in Parts VIII and IX.

The immortality of the soul depends upon the will of God in the sense that God was free to create or not to create such a soul as ours; but not in the sense that our soul is now immortal only because God wills it to be so, independently of any signs or marks or indications of this immortality imprinted in the soul itself by the hand of the Creator.

It is quite true that, as we cannot know the secret will of any human being, so with stronger reason, we cannot know by reason alone the will of God; but if God manifests His will by giving to the being He creates such faculties, aspirations, and tendencies as require an immortal existence, it is clear, then, that we can know God's will just as we know the will of any human being from the exterior signs manifesting it. Now, as our arguments have proved, it is precisely from such outward manifestations and signs that we demonstrate the immortality of the human soul. (See n. **209.**)

Therefore, the immortality of the soul, announced by revelation, can also be proved from reason.

OBJECTION IV

236. If it is true, as stated in Part I, Chapter VIII, that a natural desire cannot be useless—that is, frustrated—and must therefore be realized in the next life, then you must admit one or the other of these consequences: First: that even the wicked will be perfectly and eternally happy. Secondly: that, if they cannot be happy, their souls at least must be annihilated and therefore are not immortal.

Answer: Neither of these consequences can be admitted; for the first, the eternal and perfect happiness of the wicked, is against the attribute of divine justice, which cannot reward iniquity; the second is against the thesis, which states that not even one single soul, whether good or wicked, will be annihilated by God.

The desire for perfect happiness will not be frustrated in this sense, that if the condition required by God's justice and demanded by man's nature for its attainment is fulfilled, that happiness will certainly be attained; but not in this sense, that it must be attained at all events, and in all cases, even if that condition is not verified; for, as right reason teaches us, the attainment of happiness, which is to be conformable to God's infinite wisdom and justice, must not be absolute but conditional, since it concerns man, an intelligent free being, capable of good

or evil, of merit or demerit, and the condition required, as reason teaches us, is submission to God's will by the observance of moral law and moral order, viz., by the conscientious discharge of the threefold duty to God, to himself and to his fellow man.

As all men are endowed with free will, and all receive the means and helps required to enable them to observe the moral law, to comply with God's will and thus put the condition necessary for attaining perfect happiness, it is evident that the desire for such happiness will not be frustrated, as far as it depends on God.

Briefly, on the part of God, the desire of perfect happiness, which He Himself impressed on the human soul, must certainly be realized, granted; on the part of men, we distinguish; if they fulfil the condition required, granted; if they do not, we deny.

OBJECTION V

237. If the soul separated from the body should still subsist, it would no longer be the essential form of the body; hence there would be no purpose for its further existence, and it would either naturally die, or be annihilated by the Creator.

Answer: It is one thing for any form to be actually informing a given body, and quite another thing to be essentially ordained always to inform that body. The fact of the soul's separation from the body does not destroy its fitness to reunite with it once more, and again act as its form. Moreover, the human soul is not only the form of the body it unites with, but also a subsisting form capable of existing both in the state of union and in that of separation. To see how false is the conclusion of the objection we are refuting, see n. **234.**

OBJECTION VI

238. No being can exist without the ability to perform the operations proper to it. Understanding is the operation proper of the intellectual soul, an operation which cannot be performed without the help of phantasms, or sensible images, supplied by bodily organs.

Answer: To understand by means of phantasms or sensible images is proper of the soul only when united to the body. When separated by death the soul exercises its intellectual faculties in the manner suited to its new mode of existence, for, as philosophy teaches, the operation of a being is always conformable to its manner of existence. See St. Thomas in his *Summa Theologica,* (p. 1^a, qu. 89. arts. 1, 2, 5, 6), where the Angelic Doctor proves that the separated soul (1) Can exercise its intellectual faculties; (2) can know other separated spiritual substances; (3) it retains the knowledge acquired in the present life, and can make use of it.

When our adversaries urge the necessity of the brain for all intellectual operations, we answer:

To put the whole matter in a few words, we distinguish between causes and conditions. Matter, brain, bodily organs are not the cause of anything; they are only a condition necessary so long as the union between soul and body lasts. There is a great difference between the flute and the breath. (See nn. **197, 198.**)

OBJECTION VII

239. Compound substances resulting from the union of a living principle with a material organism, are so conditioned that when one of the constitutents perishes the other also ceases to exist. Such is the fate of all animals. Therefore in the human compound, as soon as the body dies the soul also must cease to exist.

Answer: What the objection asserts happens only when the constituents concur in the same way and with mutual dependence in the formation of a given compound being, as is the case with the lower animals, the brute creation. But in the formation of man, the human compound, the body does not communicate its being to the soul, but rather receives it from it. Therefore the human soul when separated from the body, withdraws and retains its own being and continues to exist and act in an independent subsistence.

OBJECTION VIII

240. The human body being corruptible, the soul, its form, must also be corruptible, for the form is always such as to be proportionate to the material organism it informs and animates.

Answer: The consequence is denied. As to the reason alleged, we reply that all that is required on the part of the form is its aptitude or fitness to inform a given body, but not a proportion implying identity of substance or mutual dependence in both constituents.

OBJECTION IX

241. If the union of the soul with the body is natural, it follows that the soul, when separated from it, remains in a kind of violent restraint, and will eventually cease to be, for, as philosophers tell us, nothing violent can last—*violentum non durat.*

Answer: If the union of the soul with a corruptible body, besides being natural, were also intended to be perpetual, it is plain that the soul separated from it, would remain in a state of violent restraint. But as such a union, in the present order of Providence, was not intended to be perpetual, therefore when it naturally ceases, the soul suffers no violence, but though separated, continues to exist. But if the natural corruptibility of the body were to be miraculously remedied, then the union with an incorruptible body would become perpetual by grace. This is exactly what divine revelation teaches as to the state of man after the final resurrection. Then only would the soul suffer

violence if forcibly separated from the risen glorified and incorruptible body, which, as will be shown farther on, will never happen.

But even admitting, for argument's sake, the separation of the soul from a glorified, incorruptible body, there would then be no violence incompatible with existence, for the soul, as a subsisting being, can continue to live, both in the state of separation and in that of union.

A still further answer to the present objection is furnished by the following considerations:

In the present order of divine providence no perpetual union of the soul with the body is essentially required, for the former does not need the latter in order to exist, being naturally immortal. The separation, being now unavoidable and natural, cannot be said to produce any violence or restraint.

We must, however, admit that, the state of violence being altogether excluded, the union of the soul with the body, directed to the formation of the human compound, man, is more connatural than separation, which, at all events, as divine truth teaches us, is to be only temporary, that is from death to the final resurrection on the Judgment Day. The chief reason is that the specific difference of the soul as distinguished from angelic spirits, consists in its being a form destined to inform and animate the body. Hence it may be said that the soul in its state of separation is in some sense an incomplete entity, though retaining all that is required to constitute it a being perfect in its own kind.

More will be said on this subject in Part IV of our work, to which the reader is referred.

OBJECTION X

How can we admit the existence of a being, such as the soul, of which we can form no image or representation?

Answer: We cannot form, for instance, a mental picture of gravitation, chemical attraction, electricity, or in fact, of any abstract concept, such as right, virtue, beauty, etc. Are we, then, justified in concluding that those forces and ideas have no existence? Images, representations, mental pictures are possible only when there is a question of substances whose material constitution falls within the scope of sense experience. As the soul is neither a square nor a triangle, neither blue nor green, neither sweet nor sour, it is evidently impossible for us to form any mental picture of it. But this fact does not authorize our opponents to deny the soul's existence.

No surgeon, no professor of anatomy, has ever been able to detect the presence of the soul in his experimental investigations. And this for the best of reasons, for such a being, the materialists claim, does not exist. But, we reply, where have they looked for it? On the dissecting table? To find the soul we must look

for it where it is, not in the dead, but in the living; for it is no muscle or joint laid bare by the surgeon's knife, but the vital principle and efficient cause of those sensitive and spiritual activities, which this life of ours exhibits. Here is where the soul must be sought, not in the anatomical operating room or in the crematory, or at the morgue.

242. Among the forty-eight writers who contributed their essays to the volume entitled "The Proofs of Life after Death," a kind of symposium edited by Robert J. Thompson, only seven openly took the negative side. As I did with regard to other supporters of the heterodox view, I shall here state the arguments of the afore-mentioned seven opponents and weigh their value in the balance of logic and common sense. The reader will see for himself how weak is the argumentative fabric sustaining views and opinions opposed to the teaching of reason, of divine revelation, and the general consent of mankind on the soul's permanent survival after death, and the everlasting retribution awaiting man in the world to come.

1. E. Ducleaux: "I, as a scientist, could not answer the proposed question. For, any reasons that may be brought forth in favor of one's opinion on any given topic are only good for the persons who bring them forth, and cannot impress the listener." [3]

We answer: Sir, if your principle were true, then it would be perfectly useless to write or consult books on any subjects, for, according to your view, their contents would be useful only for their authors and would be of no benefit whatever to other readers.

2. Prof. S. Brunot.[4] He boldly affirms, "that all arguments alleged by philosophers from Plato to this day on the positive side, that is, in favor of the soul's immortality, have long since been destroyed by criticism, so that absolutely nothing of them is left."

Answer: Of one thing we are sure, and that is the fact that all objections urged by materialists and infidels against immortality and future retribution have been solved, as is shown by the numberless works written on those subjects in almost every language spoken by man. But, on the other hand, we have yet to hear of any book composed by modern or ancient critics, containing arguments that have never been refuted, giving difficulties that have never been solved, and confuting the arguments of the old schoolmen. The writer of such a book has not yet been born.

3. Dr. Hericourt. Here is a specimen of the reasoning powers of this supposed learned Doctor: "The human soul has no more real existence than the flame of a lamp. And when the lamp goes out, where goes the flame?" [5]

[3] Page 48. [4] Page 68. [5] Page 85.

Answer: We shall reply to the Doctor's question when he shall have proved what he takes for granted, that "man's soul is nothing else but a flame of physiological conditions and that human personality is nothing."

4. Dr. E. Eulenberg. Here is what he thinks of the question at issue, the soul's life after death: "We are not aware of a single fact or argument objectively and scientifically proving, or even favoring individual immortality." [6]

Answer: Leaving aside the fact of divine revelation, certifying to that truth, as he may not believe in its existence, there is at hand an endless array of arguments, that are to be found in millions of books filling the libraries of the civilized world and objectively proving that very truth, the immortality of the human soul.

Moreover, we need not resort to science for our demonstration, for mental philosophy, that part of special metaphysics, which is called psychology, is fully competent to deal with that question and to settle it satisfactorily, as it has been done from time immemorial even to this day.

5. Dr. Minot J. Savage: "I hold that the scientific method is the only method of knowledge, and that nothing can be said to be known unless it be capable of demonstration with the scientific method." [7]

Answer: The Doctor is here greatly mistaken, for things may come to our knowledge from other even more reliable sources or methods than those supplied by scientific or experimental methods. Truth may be reached by philosophical reasonings, or may be derived from the testimony of authority either human or divine. (See nn. **403, 404.**)

6. Simon Newcomb: "I have never been able to think out any satisfactory theory on the subject of the continuance of the conscious soul of man after death." [8]

Answer: We beg leave to inform this writer that the survival of man's soul after death is a stern fact demonstrated by reason, announced by God's own revelation and confirmed by the verdict of mankind. Hence it cannot be called a theory, which is simply an hypothesis assuming some principle, law, or agent to account for certain phenomena, such as Newton's theory of gravitation, and the vibratory theory of light and heat.

7. Robert J. Thompson. This well-meaning compiler and editor of the Symposium entitled "Proofs of Life after Death" in his concluding pages advances some assertions, which call for criticism. He writes: "Psychical research will furnish the demonstration of life after death, we are fully convinced, within the next twenty years." [9]

This statement was given out in 1908, that is nearly ten years ago: hence in less than ten years the much sought light will at

[6] Page 87. [7] Page 143. [8] Page 69. [9] Page 314.

last appear. Though this seems to be welcome news, yet we are glad to inform Mr. Thompson that we need not wait for the results of psychical research to settle the mighty question of man's immortality. It has been settled thousands of years ago by man's reason, by the light of God's revelation and the common sense of the human race.

Moreover, he himself admits that "to many of the keenest, brightest, most profound thinkers psychical research has already proven that there is conscious existence after death."

And as this all-important question has been solved in the affirmative by the forty-one writers, who fill the ablest pages of his book, we are inclined to believe that, to be convinced of the truth of the soul's conscious existence after death, he no longer needs the forthcoming light of psychical research.

243. "Life is real, life is earnest
And the grave is not its goal.
Dust thou art, to dust returnest
Was not spoken of the soul." [10]

"Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself and startles at destruction?
'Tis divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
The stars shall fade away, the sun itself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amid the war of elements,
The wrecks of matter, and the crash of worlds." [11]

"What can frighten you? If the suns come down, the moons crumble into dust, systems after systems are hurled into annihilation, what is that to you? Stand as a rock, you are indestructible." [12]

CHAPTER V

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE REVELATION ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

244. Our reasonable, discreet readers will not require from us distinct proofs for every doctrine, which, outside of our special theme, The Future Life, must be assumed and supposed as true; and they will, no doubt, be satisfied if we simply refer them to

[10] Longfellow, A Psalm of Life.
[11] Joseph Addison, Cato, from Acts iv and v. [12] Swami Vivekananda.

the authorities and works, where such doctrines are fully demonstrated. Thus, the testimonies which we are about to cite from both the Old and the New Testament, could have no value as proofs of our thesis unless we take for granted the authenticity and divine inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, and the existence of an infallible authority to interpret them. Were we to undertake to prove these and other doctrinal points that come in contact with our subject, our work, instead of being a simple treatise on The Future Life would become a regular encyclopedia *de omni re scibili et quibusdam aliis*, as the saying has it. In accordance with this premise, for proofs of the authority and inspiration of the Sacred Books, see "Outline of Bible Knowledge," edited by Most Reverend Archbishop Messmer, and the following theologians: Mazzella, Perrone, Schiffini, Hunter, etc.

As to the necessity of an infallible authority to determine the true meaning of divine revelation, a truth fully demonstrated by Catholic writers, for brevity's sake I will here advance only two proofs.

245. The first is taken and condensed from the valuable work of Rev. Daniel Lyons, "Christianity and Infallibility, Both or Neither":

Because I believe that God made a supernatural revelation of His will for the benefit of man to the end of time, from this fact I conclude that the wisdom of God must have provided a living, infallible witness, guardian, and interpreter to authenticate, safeguard, and expound in all ages the received revelation and preserve it in all its purity and integrity. Without such an authority how can I be certain that I understand aright its teachings? Admittedly revelation is open to more than one interpretation. As a matter of fact many and not infrequently the most opposite meanings have been put upon some of its most important parts.

> " . . . in religion,
> What damned error, but some sober brow
> Will bless it, and approve it with a text?"[1]

If there be no living, infallible interpreter, how is it possible to determine with certainty the meaning of God's word? And if this cannot be ascertained, of what practical value, I ask, would such a revelation be to man? Assuming, then, that God made a supernatural revelation of a body of truths to be believed, and of precepts to be observed to enable man to fulfil his destiny upon earth, submission to God's will, and thus to reach the eternal happiness of heaven, the Creator's wisdom and goodness must have provided a living and infallible teacher of His revealed word.

246. The second proof may be formulated thus: Our Lord

[1] Merchant of Venice, Act iii, sc. 2.

and Saviour, Jesus Christ, before ascending into heaven, said: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."[2] Here is a solemn command to believe in all the doctrines of His Gospel under pain of reprobation; doctrines which the Church was charged to preach to all nations. Hence we argue thus:

It is evidently absurd to suppose that Almighty God, infinite truth, will impose on man under pain of sin and damnation the duty of believing a fallible teacher, one who may both deceive and be deceived, for then we should be obliged to believe falsehood on pain of disbelieving God, and God, who is truth itself, would make belief in falsehood essential to salvation, a supposition not less impious than absurd. Therefore, when we assert that God authorized the Church to teach, we only say in other words that He holds Himself responsible for what she teaches. He vouches for the truth of her testimony; and if she could err or misinterpret the revealed truth, God Himself would become responsible for error, and authorize and sanction the teachers of falsehood, which is blasphemy to suppose.

247. After establishing the absolute necessity of a living, infallible interpreter of God's revelation, it is but natural to ask: Where shall we look, in this wide world for the body of teachers divinely commissioned to teach and to teach infallibly? The answer, thank God, is not far to seek. For when there is question of identifying the Church authorized to teach infallibly, we Catholics propose a question in which we encounter no opponents; we vindicate a privilege to which we find no rival claimants. For it is a well-known fact that all the dissenting sects, no matter how much they may differ from one another, are unanimously agreed on this point of disclaiming infallibility in their teachers. Moreover, one of the chief charges they make against the Catholic Church is precisely this, her claim to immunity from error in her teachings concerning faith and morals. Therefore, the free and spontaneous concession of our adversaries dispenses us from all further proof.

To resume our argument, we reason thus: As God made a revelation to man, He must have appointed an infallible authority to interpret it. All Christian denominations, separated from Rome, disclaim infallibility. Therefore the Catholic Church alone is in possession of such a gift. Therefore she alone can teach infallibly.

248. We have purposely dwelt at some length on this point, the necessity of an infallible authority, realized in the Catholic Church, because our remarks will find an ample application throughout our work, in which we frequently appeal to her unerring voice in determining the true, real meaning of God's revealed word. It is owing to the presence and permanent ac-

[2] Mark xvi. 16.

tivity of such infallible teacher that the whole structure of God's revelation, contained in Scripture and tradition, in the written as well as in the spoken word, presents itself to the human mind as perfectly consistent, coherent, and supremely rational. Among the books of the Old Testament we quote also from Tobias, Wisdom, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, and the Machabees, which have been rejected by the Reformers of the fifteenth century as uncanonical and uninspired, and excluded by all Protestant Bibles as apocryphal. Protestant readers will therefore reject our quotations from those books as not authentic and beside the mark. Our answer is that we cite them because the infallible authority of the Catholic Church admits them as authentic, and inspired, and the Tridentine Canon, which includes them, reproduces the exact catalogue of Canonical Books approved by the Church as early as the end of the third century of the Christian era. By so doing she stood by the apostolic tradition, and invariably defended the divine inspiration of those wrongly discarded portions of God's revelations. In this matter we may safely adopt the famous saying of St. Augustine: "I would not believe the Gospel, except the authority of the Catholic Church moved me thereto." See Bishop Mullen's classical work, "Canon of the Old Testament."

249. According to Charles Augustus Briggs, a well-known Protestant minister, and able writer,[3] "The early reformers in rejecting the so-called Deutero-Canonical Books, were influenced by dogmatic considerations, arising from their novel theory of faith and good works." And we may add, they were impelled by their determination to reject as unscriptural several Catholic doctrines distinctly contained in those Books. In fact, one of them, Whiteker, says: "Neither will I believe free will, though the Book of Ecclesiasticus should confirm it a hundred times."[4] One of the glaring errors of Luther was the denial of man's free will, which is most clearly asserted in that Book.[5]

It is scarcely necessary to assure the reader that all the Biblical quotations we are about to allege contains statements bearing directly or indirectly on the question at issue, the immortality of man's soul, for they evidently refer to human creatures whether still existing in this world, or already forming part of the inhabitants of the next.

Neither is it necessary for us to prove the self-evident truth that immortality and life everlasting applied by Holy Scripture to rational creatures, convey the same identical truth; namely, the endless duration of their existence in the future world.

250. It would be easy enough for any one, having at his com-

[3] Introduction to Holy Scripture, ch. vi.

[4] Contra Camp., p. 17.

[5] See Ecclus. xv. 14–18.

mand a complete Biblical Concordance, to gather an array of texts referring in some way or other to eternity. But such plan would fail to bring conviction, for the question we are dealing with is not to inquire whether such terms as "eternal," "everlasting," "endless," "immortal," may be found in Holy Writ, a fact which no one can deny, but whether such terms can be applied to the duration of human souls, with which we are now exclusively concerned. To secure this object I found it necessary to analyze every text, and to examine its connection with the context, and this I did under the guidance of approved commentators, so as to be sure that the alleged quotation was pertinent, appropriate, and to the point.

The readers will no doubt be surprised at the large number of quotations bearing witness to the same truth and some will think that a considerable retrenchment might have been made by the author. Our line of apology is that we are writing also for a class of hypercritical readers, regular Aristarchs, whom only cumulative evidence can convince. Whoever does not belong to this class of exacting critics may easily skip the supernumerary quotations, and thus economize time. Some remarks will accompany such citations as call for special elucidation, so as to bring out their full meaning and their bearing on the matter under discussion.

Only one or two quotations from each inspired Book are given in full; of the others we shall cite only chapter and verse.

Bearing in mind the opportune warning of St. Peter, "Understanding this first: that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation,"[6] we deemed it our peremptory duty not to put forth a single explanation of the texts adduced that is not sanctioned by reliable biblical scholars and approved by the Church.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMMORTALITY OF MAN'S SOUL, ACCORDING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

251. Tobias xii. 9: "Alms . . . maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." ii. xii. 9.

Psalm lxxvi, 6: "I thought upon the days of old and I had in my mind the eternal years." Cardinal Bellarmine thus comments on this passage: "The holy king in his meditations dwelt particularly on the shortness of time as compared with the eternity of the future life that awaits us."

252. Psalm xxxvi, 18, 29: "The Lord knoweth the days of the undefiled; and their inheritance shall be forever."

[6] 2 Peter i. 20.

The supporters of the annihilation theory in behalf of the reprobates are wont to quote from this Psalm, verse 19, in proof of their assertion: "And the enemies of the Lord, presently after they shall be honored and exalted, shall come to nothing and vanish like smoke."

These expressions have all reference to the short-lived happiness of sinners on earth, not to their extinction after death. In fact, in verse 28 of the same Psalm it is stated that "The unjust shall be punished," words which would be meaningless, if those to be punished shall have ceased to exist.

Ecclesiastes xii. 5. "Man shall go into the house of his eternity."

Wisdom iii. 1, 4. "The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torments of death shall not touch them. Their hope is full of immortality."

Ibid. v. 16. "The just shall live forever more."

The words "forever more" are a literal translation of the Latin *In saecula saeculorum,* a scriptural expression, which according to St. Augustine, means a duration without end.[1]

Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 31. "They that explain me [Wisdom] shall have life everlasting." xxxi, 10.

Daniel xii, 3. "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity."

2 Machabees vii. 9. "The king of the world will raise us up. who die for his laws, in the resurrection of eternal life."

Ibid. viii. 36. "My brethren, having now undergone a short pain, are under the covenant of eternal life."

253. To show that what was asserted by the authors we quoted has not been denied or contradicted by another sacred writer, Solomon, to whom is attributed the Book of Ecclesiastes, we must solve a difficulty based on the following sentences of said author: "The death of man and of beasts is one, and the condition of them both is equal; as man dieth, so they also die: . . . and man hath nothing more than beast. And all things go to one place; of earth they were made, and unto earth they return together." iii. 19, 20.

A certain class of rabbinical scholars of the materialistic type allege this passage to prove that the authority of the Old Testament is diametrically opposed to the Christian doctrine of the immortality of man's soul. The infamous Voltaire, in his so-called Philosophical Lexicon, held that these words evidently teach the moral, or rather immoral, system of Epicurus, who denied the existence of future life, and extolled the wisdom of those who, indulging their passions, make the best use of the present short life. Voltaire then expresses his surprise that such a book should have been reckoned by the Jewish tradition among the inspired writings and he gives as a reason that, at that

[1] De Civ. Dei, xxi. 23.

time, books were very scarce. The flippant unbeliever overlooked the fact that the writer of Ecclesiastes says in the same Book, (ch. xii. 12): "Of making many books there is no end."

But let us address ourselves to the difficulty presented by the words quoted above (Eccles. iii. 19-20). According to the angelic Doctor, St. Thomas,[2] there are two solutions of this old difficulty. According to the first, Solomon, the writer, does not utter his own thoughts and sentiments, but reproduces the language of unbelieving materialists, who admit no distinction whatever between man and beasts. A similar language, the vain reasoning of the wicked, is to be found in the second chapter of the Book of Wisdom, of whom the inspired writer says: "Reasoning with themselves, but not right." (ii. 1, 2, 3.)

According to the second explanation, the sacred author wished to impress the fact that there is indeed no difference between man and the inferior animals as to their bodily organism, which is in both material, but that there is a very important distinction between the soul of the beasts, which is reproduced from the forces of matter and dies with it, and the soul of man, which is created by God's omnipotence and survives the body. Hence of the animal and the human body, Solomon says in the same Book (ch. xii. 7), "And the dust returns into its earth, from whence it was": but of man's soul the same inspired writer tells us: "And the spirit returns to God who gave it."

254. The other text of Ecclesiastes, which calls for an explanation, is the following: "Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward, and if the spirit of the beasts descend downward?" (iii. 21.)

The Agnostics of our times recognize in this somewhat noncommittal language their own theory, held, they maintain, thousands of years ago by their predecessors. They will not bluntly deny the immortality of the human soul, and the essential distinction between man and the brute creation, yet they will contend that we can know nothing about these questions, and that consequently neither statement can be proved. Rudolph Cornely, S.J., faces that difficulty and gives this solution: "The meaning of that passage is as follows: Though death is common to men and beasts, and though they both seem to possess the same vital spirit, if we consider only external appearances, yet there exists between them a very great difference, of which, alas! many take no account, failing to reflect that the soul of man after death ascends to God, as the inspired writer tells us in the same book (xii. 7), and that therefore continues to live, whilst the soul of beasts perishes with the body which goes to the grave."[3] Ecclesiastes in that passage (iii. 21) reproduces the language of the voluptuaries of his days who, living like beasts, tried to pur-

[2] See his Summa Theologica, Ia, qu. 75, art. 6.

[3] Introduction, vol. ii, p. 180.

suade themselves and others that they would wholly perish like beasts, thus banishing the disturbing fear of future judgment. The true sentiments of the sacred writer cannot be mistaken, when we recall what in that same book he tells us of the duty and destiny of man. "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is all man." (xii, 13.) "Man shall go into the house of his eternity," (xii. 5), that is, he will dwell eternally either in heaven or in hell, the place which he himself shall have chosen by his good, or by his evil deeds.

Moreover, it is only of man that Ecclesiastes xii. 5, says: "Man shall go into the house of his eternity," for he alone possesses a soul that shall live forever.

The real sentiments of the inspired author are also shown in the concluding words of that Book, which sums up in one pithy sentence, all the duties of man in this life, that he may render himself worthy of the eternal happiness promised to the just in the next.

"Let us all hear together the conclusion of the discourse. Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is all man." Eccles. xii. 13.

CHAPTER VII

IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

255. It remained for the Eternal Word, when He took flesh in the mystery of the Incarnation, to bring this majestic truth into the clearest light by the preaching of His Gospel. The infallible authority of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, has guaranteed to mankind forever the momentous fact of the endless duration of every human soul brought into being by the omnipotence of the Creator, thus dissipating all doubts, and sweeping off all denials from men's minds. He revealed it by the whole tenor of His teachings, the precepts of which require for adequate fulfilment and recompense a life beyond the narrow boundaries of time. He revealed it by direct statements such as these—"Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."[1] "He [God] is not the God of the dead but of the living."[2] "The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[3] "In My Father's house there are many mansions."[4] And He proved His right to reveal, and to the acceptance of His revelation by men, by the stupendous miracles He performed: particularly that of His own triumphant resurrection; the astounding feat, on which He had staked the truth of His Gospel, the divinity of His person, and the heavenly character of His mission. And His Holy Church proclaims through-

[1] Matt. v. 12. [2] Ibid. xxii. 32. [3] Ibid. xiii. 43. [4] John xiv. 2.

out the flight of centuries the doctrine of her Founder—"I believe in Life everlasting."

Jesus Christ Himself, then, the heavenly appointed Herald, delivered this sublime message to men with the clearness of the noonday sun; hence He could with justice announce Himself as the Light of the World. "*Ego sum lux mundi.*"[5] The light destined to illumine, as the same apostle tells us, "every man that cometh into this world."[6] "The only begotten Son," writes the blessed disciple, "who is in the bosom of the Father; He hath declared Him";[7] that is, He was sent upon earth to reveal to us God's will in our regard. Though mankind were never left in ignorance of their lofty destiny, whether in the patriarchal age or in the law of nature, or in the Mosaic dispensation, yet it must be said that its divine revelation reached the meridian splendor when the Son of Eternal Justice, the Incarnate Word, appeared upon earth and lived and conversed with men. This is precisely the truth taught by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the Fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by the Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world."[8]

256. The Books constituting the New Testament are twenty-seven in number, and, wonderful to say, appropriate quotations can be alleged from twenty-six of them, showing how truly the dogma of immortality, the interminable life of man's soul, occupies a most conspicuous part in the pages of Christ's Gospel, and the inspired writings of His disciples. The only portion of the New Testament that contains no reference to the soul's endless existence is the very short letter of St. John to Gaius, which treats of personal matters not calling for any special mention of truths of Faith such as life eternal.

Here also we shall give from each Book only one or two quotations in full, and cite of the others chapter and verse.

257. Matthew xxii. 31, 32: "And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken by God, saying to you: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.[9] He is not the God of the dead but of the living." God is, properly speaking, the Lord of the living, for, before Him, the dead are alive in their surviving, living souls, which, on the day of the Last Judgment, are to be reunited to their risen bodies, never to be separated from them, for He who uttered the words quoted above also said: "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."[10]

[5] John viii. 12. [6] Ibid. i. 9. [7] Ibid. i. 18.
[8] Heb. i. 1, 2. [9] Ibid. xix. 29. [10] John v. 28, 29.

Mark x. 17: "What shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?" Ibid. ix. 42–47.

Luke xviii. 18: "Good Master, what shall I do to possess everlasting life?"

258. Here the following remark will not be out of place: The man who put such weighty question to Our Divine Master must have heard Him often speak of that life which He called "everlasting." In fact, as it appears from the context of the two evangelists quoted above, our Blessed Saviour had been speaking to the multitude of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the eternal reward promised to those who imitate the innocence of little children, and so the questioner understood Him. Now, if the word "everlasting" was not to be taken in its obvious, literal sense, as meaning an endless duration, Christ was bound in justice to instruct that man and the rest of His audience and tell them plainly that He never meant to promise an everlasting reward, but something else instead. Did He do so? Did He correct the supposed error or mistake of His questioner? No, by no means. He simply gave a straightforward answer to the real point He was questioned about, how to secure everlasting life, and told him that he could do so by keeping God's commandments.

Christ spoke of everlasting life as the future recompense of the just, on several other occasions, and particularly in His description of the last judgment, telling them of the sentence He will pronounce: "The just shall go into life everlasting."[11] Did our Blessed Redeemer ever explain away the terms "everlasting," "eternal," as if they did not mean an endless duration? Let our opponents read the New Testament from its first to its last line and find, if they can, a single expression modifying or altering the meaning of these terms.

The reader will pardon us for inserting this digression, for our remark may be utilized in solving the difficulty of the meaning of the word "everlasting," particularly when applied to the endless punishment of the wicked. (See Matthew xxv. 46.)

John iii. 15: "That whosoever believeth in Him [Christ] may not perish but have life everlasting." iii. 16, 36; iv. 14, 36; v. 24, 39; vi. 40, 47, 55; x. 28; xii. 25; xvii. 3.

Acts of the Apostles xiii. 46: "You judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life." xiii. 48.

Romans ii. 7: "To them indeed, who according to patience in good work, seek glory, and honor and incorruption, eternal life." vi. 22.

1 Corinthians xv. 53: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality." The Apostle St. Paul here evidently speaks on the future, glorious, bodily life reserved to the risen just. But in what does this

[11] Matt. xxv. 46.

resurrection consist? In the new life communicated through divine power, by the blessed soul to the risen body. We have here, then, the assurance of a twofold immortality—that of the soul, which never dies, and that of the body, restored to an immensely better life by the power of God. xv. 19. Romans viii. 23.

259. 2 Corinthians iv. 17, 18: "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things, which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." By these words St. Paul meant to point out the essential distinction between the goods of this life, which are transitory; and those of the next, which are permanent. Now, this reasoning could not stand, if by the term "eternal" were meant not an endless, but only a temporary duration of future happiness. For on that supposition both the goods of this life and those of the next would finally come to an end, and therefore no contrast or opposition could be asserted as existing between them. This same reasoning can be justly applied to every passage of Holy Scripture that points out the necessary difference and distinction between the goods of time and those of eternity. (See Rom. viii. 18; 1 John ii. 17.)

Galatians vi. 8: "He that soweth in the spirit of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." v. 21.

Ephesians v. 5: "No fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person (which is a serving of idols) hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

These words, "the kingdom of God," are fully understood if compared with those of the Evangelist St. Luke, chapter i, 32, 33: "And He (the Son of the Most High) shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Here let us also remark that by the expressions "the kingdom of God," "the kingdom of heaven," our Divine Saviour often meant to indicate the eternal inheritance promised to the just in His heavenly kingdom. Matthew v. 3; vi. 33; vii. 21; xi. 12; xix. 16.

See Ephesians i. 18.

Philippians iv. 3: "The rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life." What is meant by being written in the Book of Life, or blotted out from it? The reader will find the answer in the following quotations: "He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out His name out of the Book of Life."[12] "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the pool of fire."[13] "There shall not enter into it [the heavenly Jerusalem] anything defiled. . . . but they that are written in

[12] Apoc. iii. 5.

[13] Ibid. xx. 15.

the Book of Life of the Lamb."[14] "And if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life."[15] The prophet David thus predicts the reprobation of the Jewish people for rejecting the future Messias: "Let them be blotted out of the Book of the Living, and with the just let them not be written."[16]

These quotations make it plain that to be written in the Book of Life means to be predestined to eternal glory; and to be blotted out from it implies eternal damnation.

Colossians i. 12: "Giving thanks to God the Father who hath made us worthy of the lot of the saints in light."

The expression "the lot among the saints" clearly means the eternal recompense allotted to the saints, as it appears from the following parallel text: "That they may receive forgiveness of sin, and a lot among the saints."[17] The context of both citations leaves no doubt about the significance of the phrase, "lot of the saints," it being the reward to be bestowed on those who, the writer tells us, are converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

1 Thessalonians iv. 16: "And so shall we be always with the Lord." The Apostle here speaks of the final lot awaiting the saints on the last Judgment Day, when as Christ said: "The just shall go into life everlasting."[18] Hence to be always with the Lord plainly means to be forever happy with Him in His eternal kingdom.

1 Thessalonians ii. 12: "Walk worthy of God who hath called you unto His Kingdom and glory."

That to be "in the Kingdom of God," or of Christ, means to possess eternal glory has been explained above under the quotation to Ephesians v. 5.

2 Thessalonians iii. 16: "Now the Lord of peace Himself give you everlasting peace." ii. 15: "The Lord Jesus Christ who hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation."

1 Timothy i. 16: "For the information of them that shall believe in Him unto life everlasting." iv. 8; vi. 12.

2 Timothy iv. 18: "The Lord will preserve me unto His heavenly Kingdom." (See above for comment on Ephesians v. 5); ii. 10, 11.

Titus iii. 7: "That being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to hope of life everlasting." 1, 2: "Unto the hope of life everlasting, which God, who lieth not, hath promised before the times of the world."

Philemon i. 15: "For perhaps He therefore departed for a season from thee that thou mightest receive Him again forever." (That is, for eternity.)

St. Anselm thus explains this passage: "God, who permits

[14] Ibid. xxi. 27. [15] Ibid. xxii. 19. [16] Ps. lxviii. 29. [17] Acts xxvi. 18. [18] Matt. xxv. 46.

evil that good may come from it, disposed that the slave Onesimus, having fled from his master, Philemon, should go to St. Paul in Rome, where being converted to the Faith, he was baptized and thus made co-heir with his Christian master, of life eternal.

Hebrews v. 9: "And being consummated, He [Christ] became to all that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation." ix. 15: "That they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance." i. 14; xiii. 14.

James i. 12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love Him." The crown which God shall give to those that prove their love for Him by keeping His commandments, is nothing less than life eternal, as it is shown by numberless testimonies of Holy Writ. See Matthew xix. 16; Mark x. 30; Luke xvi. 9; John x. 28. 1 John ii. 25; Apoc. ii. 10; James ii. 5.

1 Peter iii. 21, 22: "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is on the right hand of God, swallowing down death, that we might be made heirs of life everlasting." v. 10: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus." i. 3, 4.

2 Peter i. 11: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

1 John ii. 25: "And this is the promise, which He [Christ] hath promised us, life everlasting." ii. 17; iii. 15; v. 11; 13, 20.

2 John 1, 2: "For the sake of the truth, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever."

Jude i. 21: "Keep yourselves in the love of the Lord, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life everlasting." i. 6, 7, 13.

Apocalypse xxi. 4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more." xxii. 5: "And they [God's servants] shall reign forever and ever." iii. 21.

We have alleged from the two Testaments more than sixty passages asserting the immortality of man's soul, or its equivalent, everlasting life, man's endless existence in the future world.

And yet, in the face of such overwhelming testimonies, Professor Hudson, an American divine, in "Human Destiny," has the effrontery to advance the following statement: "If we expunge from the Bible all those passages, in which man's immortality is expressly mentioned or unquestionably assumed, we leave the volume unchanged."[19] This means, in plain English, that in the whole Scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse, we cannot find a single text to prove the soul's immortality. Comments are needless.

[19] Page 58.

CHAPTER VIII

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL PROVED FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

260. When we consider the attitude of the Catholic Church toward Holy Scripture, of which she is the divinely appointed interpreter, we may easily foresee what may be her teachings on the question at issue, the immortality of man's soul. Basing then her statements on the revealed word of God, she pronounced several dogmatic definitions, of which we quote the following, contained in the Acta of the Fifth Lateran Ecumenical Council held in Rome A. D., 1512–1517:[1]

PAPAL DEFINITIONS AND THEIR IMPORT

"With the approval of this sacred Council, we condemn and reprobate all who assert that man's intellective soul is mortal."[2] Father D. Palmieri[3] pertinently observes that by this definition the Sovereign Pontiff meant to teach that the human soul is by its nature, that is, by the exigency of its spiritual faculties, immortal. Hence it follows that the teaching of the Church on the soul's immortality is identical with that of reason and sound philosophy, which means that man's soul is shown to be naturally immortal. This is the view taken by the distinguished schoolman and Doctor, St. Bonaventure, when he writes: "The rational soul is immortal according to what Catholic faith teaches, a truth taught by philosophy and right reason."[4]

The pontifical definition noted above was also intended to refute the absurd theory of some philosophers who maintained that something may be true according to divine revelation, that is, as a matter of faith; and false according to human intelligence, namely, as a matter of reason. The absurdity of such a theory is made apparent when we reflect that reason and revelation are two lights coming from the same divine source, which therefore cannot conflict with each other, for God, Infallible Truth, cannot contradict Himself. (See Vatican Council Constit. De Fide et Ratione—Second Canon.)

The Supreme Pontiff, Pius IX, in his Encyclical of November 9, 1896, thus speaks of this point: "Though faith is above reason, yet there can never be found any dissension between them, since they both spring from the same immutable source of truth, the Most High, and are intended to lend to each other mutual help."

To the question, then, "Can the soul's immortality be proved

[1] D. Enchiridion, p. 255. [2] Pope Leo X., December 19, 1513.
[3] De Deo Creante, Thesis 29, p. 263. [4] 2, Dist. 17, a. 1. q. 1.

by reason, and therefore established independently of divine revelation?'' the illustrious Dominican writer, Melchior Canus, in his classical treatise, *De Locis Theologicis,* answers thus:

261. ''It is erroneous, we may say heretical, to assert that natural reason cannot of itself prove the origin, life, and endless existence of man's soul. This, in fact, has actually been done by the most eminent Catholic writers, as well as by eminent philosophers, such as Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Socrates, and others, who argued from principles of reason alone.'' [5]

Pius IX, refuting and condemning the false Traditionalism of Augustine Bonnetty, states that reason can demonstrate with certitude the existence of God and the spirituality of the human soul. Here the Sovereign Pontiff teaches implicitly the soul's immortality, which, as philosophers show, follows logically and necessarily from its spirituality.

CHAPTER IX

THE SYMBOLS OF FAITH OR CHRISTIAN CREEDS

262. A brief but comprehensive statement of Catholic Doctrine on our present subject is found in the Creeds or Symbols of Faith.

The principal symbols used by the Church, both in her doctrinal teachings and her liturgical worship, are the following:

I. The Apostles' Creed, so called because claimed to be of apostolic origin, according to the ancient testimonies of St. Justin Martyr (A. D. 169), St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (A. D. 202), the African Tertullian (A. D. 240), and the Oriental Origen (A. D. 325).

II. The Nicene Creed, framed at the first Ecumenical Council of Nicea (A. D. 325).

III. The Constantinopolitan Creed, compiled at the first General Council of Constantinople (A. D. 381).

IV. The Tridentine Creed, composed at the Council of Trent (A. D. 1564). It is also designated as the Creed of Pius IV, who published it in his Bull *''Injunctum nobis''* of the aforesaid date.

V. As to the *Quicumque* or the Athanasian Creed, Professor Henry Brewer recently proved satisfactorily, it seems, that its authorship cannot be attributed to St. Athanasius, the valiant patriarch of Alexandria, though it contains all the doctrines which he held and vigorously defended. This biblical scholar shows, with sufficiently solid arguments, that the composition

[5] D Enchiridion, p. 444.

of this remarkable Creed is to be attributed to St. Ambrose, the learned archbishop of Milan.[1]

This symbol was soon adopted by both the Western and the Eastern Church, introduced into the liturgy, and reputed as expressing in clear language the Apostolic Faith.

All the above-mentioned Creeds convey the truth, with which we are now chiefly concerned; namely, the traditional belief of the Church and the faithful in the existence of future life, where rational creatures receive from the Lord, the Supreme Judge of mankind, either eternal reward or eternal punishment, according to their merits or demerits. Now, no retribution can be said to be eternal unless the creature to whom it is allotted, shall exist for all eternity, and be therefore immortal.

All these symbols, though couched in different terms, substantially proclaim the truth so tersely expressed by the *Quicumque:* "Those that shall have done good things shall go into eternal life; but those that shall have done evil shall go into eternal fire." It is well known that a few years ago some dignitaries of the Anglican Church in Canada, in one of their general conventions, resolved to expunge from that Creed the Article of Faith which regards the everlasting punishment of the wicked. That many other Protestant ministers of our times are imitating their example, and share with the Unitarians the rejection of eternal pains, will be considered later on in the tenth part of this work.

CHAPTER X

IMMORTALITY OR ETERNAL LIFE PROVED FROM THE LITURGY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

263. The passage or transition from the Creeds to the liturgy is quite natural; the former give us the *lex credendi*—the rule of faith, the latter tells us the *formula precandi*—the form of prayer or of worship; hence the saying: *Formula precandi est lex credendi.*—The manner of praying furnishes the rule of believing, and the rule of believing regulates the form of prayer.

For brevity's sake I will confine the reader's attention to only one portion of the extensive field of Roman Liturgy, the Holy Mass, which portion may rightly be called the most sacred of all its several parts. We shall then limit our investigations to that marvelous rite, and examine the prayers of the Church employed in its celebration. This kind of review will interest not only the priests, to whom Latin is familiar, but also lay people, who may provide themselves with a Missal for the laity, an English approved version of the Latin Missal used by priests in the

[1] D. Enchiridion, p. 18, note.

celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. My labor in going over the Missal from cover to cover has been amply rewarded, as may be judged from the following results, a truly striking revelation.

The number of prayers by which Holy Church implores from God for the faithful that greatest of blessings, the attainment of eternal happiness, is not less than three hundred and sixty. The wordings employed are, of course, varied, but they mean substantially one and the same thing—the attainment and the possession of heavenly glory, the crowning gift of God's infinite goodness and mercy. This circumstance reminds us of what commentators have remarked on the conclusion of each of the eight beatitudes preached by our Divine Saviour in His Sermon on the Mount. With the exception of the first and the last, which distinctly promise the kingdom of heaven, the other six beatitudes convey the promise of the same heavenly recompense, but they express it in different terms.

264. Moreover, we are not surprised that the principal object the Church has in view in that most sacred rite, the clean oblation foretold by the Prophet Malachias,[1] is to secure to the faithful that greatest of heavenly favors, everlasting happiness in God's kingdom.[2] Here we have an additional proof of the cheering truth to be stated in Part IV; namely, that all the dealings of Divine Providence with rational creatures, both in the natural and the supernatural order, are directed to the same lofty purpose, the glory of God and the eternal salvation and happiness of men. In the invocation "*Hanc igitur,*" in the Canon of the Mass, immediately before the consecration, the great central act of the holy sacrifice, the officiating priest prays to the Lord that, through the merits of the spotless victim, Jesus Christ, he and the assisting faithful may be delivered from eternal damnation and numbered among the saints. And in that most sacred of all moments, when the officiating priest administers to himself Holy Communion and distributes it to the faithful, the Church bids him pronounce those sublime words: "May the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ keep my soul for life eternal"; "May the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ keep your soul for life eternal," thus reminding us of the everlasting bliss of which every worthy communion is a guarantee and a pledge. Of this we are assured by the words of our Divine Master Himself, who said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day."[3]

265. Most appropriate and sublime in their significant brevity are the words of the Ritual, which the priest pronounces in the act of administering Viaticum to the dying Christian: "Receive the Viaticum of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may

[1] Mal. i. 11. [2] John xiv. 3. [3] John vi. 55.

protect you against the malign enemy, and bring you to life everlasting."

266. Regarding this sacrament St. Thomas proposes to himself this little question or difficulty: "This sacrament is called Viaticum, because, nourishing us travelers in this life, it is intended to bring us to our heavenly country: but this purpose or effect is common to all the sacraments, which are administered to us travelers for that same object, that is to enable us to reach the glory of that celestial country."

He thus solves the difficulty: "The end of a sacrament is twofold. The proximate or immediate end is the sanctification of the recipient; and the last end is life eternal. To reach this last end, the Holy Eucharist is most efficacious, inasmuch as it really contains that by which the gates of heaven were opened to us, that is, the blood of Christ. Therefore it is for that special reason called Viaticum." [4]

267. In this connection it is well to recall the cheering thought that the world we inhabit, nay, the whole universe, though enjoyed also by God's enemies, and by such of His other creatures as refuse or neglect to recognize Him as their Sovereign Lord and Supreme Benefactor, was created for the special benefit of His faithful, loyal, grateful servants. This is so true that to the question, "When shall mankind cease to exist upon earth?" Holy Scripture, God's own word, gives the following answer registered in the Apocalypse, the last of the inspired books. The souls of the martyrs and the saints who, witnessing so many iniquities in this world, cried with a loud voice, saying: "How long, O Lord, (Holy and True), dost Thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? . . . And it was said to them that they should rest for a little time till their fellow-servants and their brethren, who are to be slain even as they, should be filled up." [5]

To the vehement desires and earnest supplications of the martyrs and the saints to the Lord that He would deign to put an end to the persecutions endured by His servants and hasten the coming of the Judgment Day, God answered that they should wait patiently for a little time, till the number of the elect—namely, those who, by their martyrdom and sufferings, were to win the heavenly crown—should be completed. The Lord said "for a little time," for, as the Psalmist tells us, "A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday, which is past." [6]

[4] In 4 Sent. D. viii., p. iii. qu. 79, art. 2.
[5] Apoc. vi. 10, 11.
[6] Ps. lxxxix. 4.

CHAPTER XI

BELIEF OF THE ANCIENT JEWISH PEOPLE IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL

SOURCE OR ORIGIN OF THEIR BELIEF

268. The idea that the Hebrews had of the nature of man's soul is that which they learned from their lawgiver, Moses, who, in few simple words narrates the origin of the first man: "And the Lord said: Let Us make man to Our image and likeness. And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth; and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul."[1] They thus learned the essential distinction between the two constituent elements of man; namely, the body, which comes from the earth; and the soul, derived from the divine breath by a direct, creative action of God, a truth clearly taught by the inspired writer, Solomon: "And the dust shall return into the earth, whence it was, and the spirit return to God, who gave it."[2]

Man, therefore, is God's image, not because of his body or of his corporal life, which are common to the brute creation, but chiefly because of his possessing a spiritual, intelligent, free soul; endowments that constitute an impassable gulf between him and all other earthly creatures, whether animate or inanimate, and cause him to resemble the noblest of created beings, the angelic spirits.

Hence, the Royal Psalmist thus addresses the Lord: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? . . . Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the work of Thy hands."[3]

The ancient Hebrews learned further precious knowledge from the Sacred Book, namely, the persevering life of the soul after death, and the consequent retribution by the Lord, the Supreme Judge, to the just and the wicked.

269. The belief of the Jewish people in a continued existence after death is exemplified in the language of the Scriptures relative to the dying holy patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and to Moses and his brother Aaron:

"Abraham died in a good old age . . . and was gathered to his people."[4] "Isaac, being spent with age, died and was gathered to his people."[5] "And Jacob charged them [his twelve sons], saying: I am now going to be gathered to my people. . . . and he died, and he was gathered to his people."[6]

[1] Gen. i. 26, ii. 7.
[2] Eccles. xii. 7.
[3] Ps. viii. 5, 6; Gen. i. 28; Heb. ii. 6, 7.
[4] Gen. xxv. 8.
[5] Ibid. xxxv. 29.
[6] Ibid. xlix. 29, 32.

"And the Lord spoke to Moses . . . saying: When thou art gone up into it [the mountain Abarim] thou shalt be gathered to thy people as Aaron thy brother died on Mount Hor, and was gathered to his people." [7]

According to the unanimous interpretation of the Fathers and the consent of Catholic commentators, the expression "gathered to their people" meant that by death their soul passed from the earthly pilgrimage [8] to the abode of their Fathers; that is, to the company of the just, awaiting in Limbo their deliverance and heavenly happiness by the coming of the Redeemer. As the wheat is gathered into the barn,[9] so their holy souls were gathered into the place allotted to the saints of the Old Testament. Such interpretation is fully borne out and confirmed by the authority of our Blessed Saviour Himself, who, referring to the surviving souls of those holy patriarchs, confutes the error of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, and consequently the soul's immortality, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." [10] "And Jesus answering said to them: . . . concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken by God saying to you: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." [11] "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." [12] (See n. **259.**)

At a meeting of the French Academy, January 17, 1749, Professor Pierret expressed his great surprise at the statement of some fellow Academicians, who held that it cannot be proved even from the oldest inspired record, that the Hebrews at the time of Moses believed in the immortality of the soul. "As for myself," he said, "nothing is more evident to me than the proofs that establish such belief." Professor Joseph Helevy, an eminent Orientalist scholar, stated before the members of the Academy that it was impossible that the Hebrews should have ignored the great truth on account of their long sojourn in countries where belief in man's future existence was firmly established, particularly among the Egyptians.

270. A distinguished Egyptologist, Isaac Myer, in his work entitled "Scarabs as Religious Symbolisms," writes: "It may be advanced with much certainty that the Hebrew people residing in ancient Egypt must have been acquainted with many of the Egyptian ideas on the subject of the eternal future life of the soul of the dead, and the reward or punishment of it in that future world, for these ideas were undoubtedly widely and generally known to the Egyptian people, and were too thoroughly formulated in the active and daily life of the ancient Egyptian population, not to have been known by the Hebrews living

[7] Deut. xxxii. 50. [8] Gen. xlvii. 9. [9] Matt. iii. 12.
[10] Acts xxiii. 8. [11] Ex. iii. 6. [12] Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

in daily contact with them, (for four hundred years)."[13]

271. M. Maury, another member of the French Academy, said: "With a few insignificant exceptions, there exists among the nations a unanimous belief on this point, that there is some kind of continuation of man's life after death, and the Jewish people were certainly no strangers to such traditional belief."

Mr. Flügel, a German savant, placed this truth in the clearest light by passing in review the beliefs and traditions of the nations of antiquity. It is therefore incontestable that the Hebrew nation must have shared the general belief, particularly if we take into account the fact that the divinely inspired books in their possession preserved their knowledge of the soul's immortality from many erroneous accretions with which gentile nations somewhat obscured it. It were strange indeed, if the Chosen People had alone remained destitute of that faith in immortality which survived amidst all the aberrations of paganism, and was more or less distinctly cherished in every nation of antiquity, being but the echo of His voice who never left Himself without witnesses among men; who speaks to mankind not only by His commissioned prophets, but also by the mouth of the sages of Greece and Rome. But nowhere was that belief more keenly realized than in the land where the Israelites dwelt for four hundred years. Herodotus, the oldest historian of the gentile nations, asserts that the Egyptians were the first to teach other peoples the truth of the soul's immortality.[14] For through all the dark idolatries of their Egyptian taskmasters, there loomed in the despised slaves the vision, grotesque and distorted, it may be, but intensely clear, of future retribution and of a world beyond the grave.

Moreover, the general prevalence of a belief in eternal punishment among the Jews, which evidently implies the endless existence of human souls, is borne out, not only by rabbinical authorities, but by the still weightier testimony of the Jewish Apocalyptic writings. According to the *Edersheim*, "only the perfectly just enter at once into Paradise. Others pass through a period of purification. But notorious breakers of the law, and especially apostates from the Jewish faith and heretics, have no hope whatever, here or hereafter."

Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, bears witness to the belief of his people in the immortality of the soul, and in the everlasting prison allotted to the wicked—sentiments evidently involving the admission of the soul's continued existence in the future world.[15]

[13] Preface p. xiv, xv. [14] Lib. ii, 123.
[15] Jewish Antiquities, ch. xviii; Jewish Wars, bk. ii.

CHAPTER XII

THE QUESTION OF THE JEWISH BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY DISCUSSED IN THE FRENCH ACADEMY

272. This important question was again discussed in the French Academy about 48 years ago, in 1870, when two Academicians, M. Derenbourg and the infamous Renan, ventured to maintain that the Hebrew Scriptures made no allusion whatever to the doctrine of immortality, and that consequently the Jewish people entirely ignored it.

The two rash opponents had reason to regret their unwarranted assertion, for Msgr. Freppel, the valiant bishop of Angers, himself a member of the Academy, in two solid essays completely refuted these adversaries by citing numerous historical documents, and particularly by adducing an array of Scriptural quotations, that placed the belief and tradition of the Jewish nation on the soul's immortality beyond all reasonable doubt.[1]

From his able defense he draws the conclusion that it is indeed supremely absurd to suppose that Moses, the prophets, and other inspired writers hid from their brothers, the Israelites, the truth of that important dogma, the soul's immortality and future retribution.

273. To the quotations alleged in a preceding chapter (XI) we add the following, which all bear undeniable testimony to the truth eloquently established by Msgr. Freppel, both in his spoken address before the French Academy and in his printed work referred to above.

Deuteronomy xxxii. 29: "O that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end!" Here the holy Prophet Moses, as he approached the end of his days, expresses his earnest wish that his people should frequently think of the lot either of happiness or of woe awaiting all of them at their death and should show their wisdom by timely forethought and provision.

274. But the strongest testimony is that offered by the classic text of the Book of Job.

Job xix. 25, 26, 27: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and on the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see and my eyes shall behold and not another; this my hope is laid up in my bosom."

Rationalists, embarrassed by so striking a witness to the truth of future resurrection and of the implied immortality of the soul to be once more reunited to its former material organism the

[1] See Œuvres Polémiques de Msgr. Freppel, Paris, 1898.

body, have taxed their brains to devise interpretations intended to nullify altogether the prophet's sublime revelation; but to no purpose, for eminent Biblical scholars, regardless of their creed, have approved the Catholic Vulgate's reading and endorsed its obvious meaning. Among others, the Abbé Le Hir, Renan's professor at St. Sulpice, speaking of his apostate disciple's translation of that text says: "We see in it neither grammar nor logic, nor scholarship worthy of the name. It is sheer obstinacy that caused this would-be Hebrew scholar to pervert God's word with a view to throw doubt and discredit on a dogma fully believed by the ancient Hebrews, and distinctly stated in other passages of Holy Writ. (Ezechiel xxxvii; Daniel xii. 2. 3.) See "*La Bible et les Decouvertes Modernes, par Vigoroux.*"

275. When dealing with these topics we must bear in mind the following remark: The truth of the soul's immortality must not be confounded with the belief in a future resurrection. The two concepts are entirely distinct; hence there may exist in some individuals the belief in the soul's immortality, without the knowledge of the resurrection of the body. And this for the following reason: The soul's immortality, clearly proclaimed in divine revelation, is also demonstrated by reason alone, as we have done in previous chapters. But the future resurrection of the human body is a doctrine exclusively known from God's revelation, on whose will it wholly depends. Reason alone cannot demonstrate the certainty of its future occurrence; but when once revealed, it can show its rational fitness and justice, as we shall show in Part IV.

As to the fact that the soul's immortality is distinctly taught in Holy Writ, it has been rightly remarked by Biblical scholars that whilst from Genesis to the Apocalypse not a single text can be advanced disproving that paramount truth, hundreds of passages can be adduced to establish it.

CHAPTER XIII

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCES OF THE JEWISH BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

276. Such strong allusions pervade the Hebrew Scriptures that the truth must force itself upon every unprejudiced reader, that the immortality of the soul formed an integral portion of Jewish belief from the most ancient times. And, indeed, if it be agreed that the Hebrew Scriptures are divinely inspired, how is it possible that the doctrine of immortality, the very foundation of religion, should have been either obscurely taught or entirely omitted?

Before alleging some of the many additional testimonies that

might be adduced in behalf of our thesis, we must refer to a special difficulty connected with our subject and subjoin the answer.

If it be true, it is asked, that belief in an endless future existence did prevail among the Jewish people from the earliest ages, how does it come that temporal blessings are chiefly, if not almost exclusively, held out to the Israelites as the reward of righteousness, whilst earthly calamities are principally threatened against the transgressors of God's commands? In answer to this question it has been justly remarked that the promises and menaces of the Pentateuch are not all addressed to individuals. In almost every instance they appeal to the nation at large. And for a nation it is obvious that there can be no immortality in heaven, inasmuch as there is no nationality there. The destinies of nations, kingdoms, and empires must be realized on earth. The great truth to be impressed upon the Israelites again and again was that their national prosperity depended absolutely upon their obedience as a nation to the Divine Law.[1] The great truth, which every people should take to heart, for as righteousness brings prosperity and happiness, so wickedness leads to misery and ruin. "Justice," says Holy Writ, "exalteth a nation; but sin maketh a nation miserable."[2]

277. Here the thoughtful reader will not object, I am sure, if, digressing for a while from our subject, we take occasion to observe that the European nations now engaged in the disastrous war that shocks the world, are severely punished for their departure from the path of justice and punished precisely in what constitutes national grandeur and splendor, that is, wealth, numerous subjects, commercial prosperity, and all the other blessings of peace. The indictment, as testified by modern history, is a heavy one. Repeated enactments of unjust and unchristian laws; official tolerance of, and, in many cases, actual connivance at the blackest crimes and insults against the Supreme Ruler of Nations, whose sacred name is allowed to be blasphemed with impunity; religious persecution under pretext of political self-protection; and other iniquities have evidently provoked the divine vengeance against the guilty. "And now, O ye kings, understand; receive instruction you that judge the earth."[3]

278. Returning to our subject, we find a striking text in the Book of Numbers. The prophet Balaam (a Gentile) prays thus to the Lord: "Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them."[4] Here the scope of his supplication could not have been that his physical dissolution should be like that of the good, because in that respect there is no distinction between them and the wicked, as they are both subject to the same agony and pangs. But Balaam, quickened by divine in-

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. 31, 32, 33.
[2] Prov. xiv. 34.
[3] Ps. ii. 10.
[4] Num. xxiii. 10.

spiration, looked beyond his present life, and longed for the immortal happiness reserved to the just in the life to come.

We cannot but see the deep conviction of immortality exhibited by David in many of his Psalms. He is penetrated to the full with conscious faith in the perpetuity of the soul, the light, the glory promised to the just, whose portion is in the Lord forever.

Thus he sings: "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear." [5] "With Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light we shall see light." [6]

Other quotations from Old Testament Revelation have been given before, particularly in the chapter on the testimonies of immortal, eternal life and need not be repeated here.

Reference may also be briefly made here to the fact that Josephus, the renowned Jewish historian, at the siege of Jerusalem, seeks to restrain his soldiers from committing suicide, by impressing upon them the doctrine of the survival of the soul after death and their accountability to God, their Supreme Judge. "Know you not that those who acting madly put an end to their own existence are condemned to the darkest place of Hades?" [7]

279. As a conclusion of this subject, a quotation from an eminent Jewish philosopher, Rabbi Moses Mendelsohn, will not be considered inappropriate. Following are the words, which, in one of his dialogues, he puts in the mouth of Socrates: "He who fulfils his duty here on earth with constancy, despite all difficulties, and who bears all adversities with resignation to the divine will, must enjoy the reward of his virtues hereafter. And the man of vice cannot pass away without being brought to the knowledge, in some mode or other, that evildoing is not the path of happiness In one word, it would be contrary to all the attributes of God, His wisdom, His goodness, His justice, if He had created rational beings that were to strive for perfection for a merely temporary, evanescent existence." [8]

280. After perusing the last three chapters treating of the belief of the ancient Jewish people in the soul's immortality and the consequent eternal retribution, the reader will no doubt be surprised at the view put forward by the "Jewish Encyclopedia" on this important subject. Here is what we find in volume v. pages 564 et seq.: "The belief in the immortality of the soul is nowhere expressly taught in the Holy Scripture. The human soul is identified with the life-blood. As soon as the soul leaves the body at death, it goes down to Sheol or Hades, there to lead a shadowy existence without life and consciousness. The belief in a continued life of the soul was discouraged and suppressed

[5] Ps. xvi. 15. [6] Ps. xxxv. 10. [7] The Jewish War.

[8] See Essay of Rabb. Hermann Adler in Symposium on Immortality.—London, 1885.

by Moses, prophet and lawgiver, as antagonistic to the belief in the Lord, the God of life, the Ruler of heaven and earth." Then the writer, confounding the immortality of man's body in the state of innocence with the immortality of the soul, writes: "Man being driven out of the garden of Eden was deprived of the opportunity of eating of the tree of life, the food of immortality." This is the stuff we are favored with by this pretentious Encyclopedia of fifteen volumes, purporting to be a descriptive record of the history, religion, literature, and customs of the Jewish people from its earliest times to the present day. If the other accounts of the Hebrew nation given in those massive volumes are as erroneous and mendacious as those we quote, that work is not worth the paper it is printed on, and deserves no place in any public library whose managers have any respect for correct knowledge and historical truth.

With regard to the condition of the souls of the just in Limbo till their deliverance by the Blessed Redeemer, Catholic doctrine teaches that, far from being solitary and sad, they enjoyed a cheerful, social life made happy by the anticipation of the heavenly glory that awaiteth them.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BELIEF OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL AND IN THE ENDLESS DURATION OF FUTURE RETRIBUTION

EGYPTIAN DOCUMENTS

281. We happily possess many written documents, which, as modern Egyptologists testify, are decisive, and make all doubt impossible on the question at issue. The most important of these documents is the Book of the Dead. It is one of the world's most ancient texts, it dates from the earliest dynasties, and extracts are found graven on the latest tombs discovered by modern archeologists. It was so popular and held to be so useful for the other life that every one was eager to take it with him into his grave. Hence, one of the most important services one could render to a dying man was to furnish him with a complete copy of the book, or at least, with a transcription of its essential parts. It was intended to instruct the departed soul in all that it must accomplish in the other world. Now, not only does this book expressly affirm the immortality of the soul, but by its very nature and aim it presupposes and exacts it, so much so that without this belief the book would be utterly pointless and lose all *raison d'être*. It implies throughout a continuation of the personality of the departed; it is still the same individual that existed upon earth, and who exclaims: "I die not a second time in the nether world."

The belief in another life is therefore one of the best established points in Egyptian religion.

We gather from the same French edition these citations: "The soul of the departed lives for eternity, it dies no more." [1]

"The soul enters into the hall of truth, and, being found unpurified, it is cleansed from sin, that it may be admitted to behold the face of the gods." [2]

In one part of the book [3] a scene is presented, which bears witness to their belief in man's immortality, his accountability, and future retribution.

The departed soul appears before Osiris, the Judge, and thus addresses him: "There is no evil in me. No one can accuse me of wrong-doing. What I have done let men proclaim and the gods will rejoice at it." Then its heart is weighed on a great balance against the symbol of justice, and before the god that registers its freedom from sin. Then the soul is allowed to enter into the realm of the blessed among the attendants of the great God.[4]

282. Professor Schiapparelli, personally known to the writer, is one of the most distinguished Egyptologists of our times, and has been for years the Curator of the famous Egyptian Museum of Turin. Its collection of Egyptian papyri is the richest in the world, as testified by encyclopedias. We here translate only a few extracts from his learned work, which, as it appears from its title, given in the footnote, exactly covers our ground.

"The inscriptions on the tombs, those found in the numerous temples whose ruins are still standing on the banks of the Nile from Alexandria to Assuan, bear eloquent testimony to the deeply rooted religious feelings of the nation. From the conception of an infinite, benevolent, and provident God, there naturally arose in the Egyptian's heart the tendency to resort to Him in his wants. He was thus led to admire, fear, and love Him, and to regulate his moral conduct so as to please Him, and thereby secure tranquillity and peace in the present life and perfect, eternal happiness in the next. Here also, as in the old Assyrian people, among the numerous deities one is recognized as supreme. With the great majority of the Egyptians the Supreme Being was believed to be uncreated, that is, self-existing, eternal, infinite, omnipotent, who, by an act of His will, created all that exists. He is present everywhere; from the height of his throne, He watches over men, chastising the wicked and rewarding the good." [5]

[1] Le livre des Morts, French translation from the Egyptian papyri preserved in the Museum of Turin, Italy, and in that of the Louvre Museum in Paris by Msgr. Pierret. Paris, 1907, ch. xxx, 12, 27.

[2] Ibid. ch. xxv. p. 308, n. 44, p. 313, n. 59. [3] Ibid. ch. cxxv, p. 315.

[4] Ibid. ch. xliv, p. 129, et seq.

[5] Religious Sentiments of the Ancient Egyptians, by Professor Ernest Schiapparelli. Rome, 1877, pp. 1, 13, 31.

283. "From the beginning to the end of his life," says Professor Budge, "the Egyptian's chief thought was of the life beyond the grave. Sufficient is known of the Egyptians' religion to prove with certainty that they possessed, about four thousand years ago, a religion and a system of morality, which, when stripped of its corrupt accretions, stands second to none among those that have been developed by the greatest nations of the earth, outside old Judaism and Christianity." [6]

"The belief, that the deeds done in the body would be subjected to scrutiny by the divine powers after death belongs to the earliest period of Egyptian civilization, and it remained substantially the same in all generations." [7]

"They held that the souls of the wicked, the incorrigibles, were punished for an indefinite period." [8]

The following sentence, expressing the dualism of man's nature, is traced to the Fifth Dynasty, 3400 B. C.

"The soul to heaven, the body to earth." [9] The very truth with the substitution of "God" for "heaven" proclaimed by Solomon: "And the dust shall return to its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it." [10]

284. Professor Steindorff writes: "The most popular, the most widespread, and, at the same time, certainly the oldest of the Egyptian notions respecting the hereafter was that, according to which, after death a human being leads a second life."

"As a condition for admission to a life of eternal blessedness several requirements are exacted from the departed. They must have led a virtuous life on earth and be found just, only then will they attain a happiness like that of the God Osiris." [11]

Rev. A. Mallon, in a recent lecture translated from the French (p. 21) gives the list of the thirty questions, to every one of which the soul, at its judgment, must answer negatively, in order to be admitted to the abode of the gods. They fully cover the whole field of possible moral transgressions.

For a collection of the Egyptian maxims or sayings relating to life and death, and divine retribution to human creatures, according to their deeds, see the work entitled "Pyramid Texts" edited by the renowned Orientalist scholar Maspero in his Reveue des Travaux.

285. Baron Ravisi writes: "We can gather a fairly accurate idea, of the Egyptians' belief on the nature of the human soul from what we find in their ancient documents. Man, they tell us, is composed of two distinct elements, a body and a soul. The former component is material, ponderable, divisible, unconscious, dependent, inert, mortal, and destructible. The lat-

[6] Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life, by Professor Wallis Budge. London, 1908. Preface.

[7] Ibid. p. 110. [8] Ibid. p. 113. [9] Ibid. p. 107. [10] Eccles. xii. 7.

[11] The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, by G. Steindorff, Professor of Egyptology at the University of Leipzig. New York, 1905, pp. 116, 131.

ter, the soul, possesses the opposite qualifications, and is therefore spiritual, unponderable, undivisible, conscious, independent, active, immortal and indestructible, with the power of perpetually animating the body in the life to come."[12]

Moreover, Egyptian philosophy quite correctly employed the following terms: "Life is the union of the soul with the body. Death is their temporary separation. Resurrection is their eternal reunion in the next world."[13] It is scarcely necessary to remark that only from divine revelation, handed down by tradition from primitive ages, could men know anything about a future union of soul and body. Perhaps through the Hebrews they become acquainted with the striking passage of the book of Job xix. 25, 26, 27, or with the prophecy of Ezechiel xxxvii.

In a learned essay Professor Francesco Rossi writes as follows:

"It is interesting to notice the three classes of departed souls and how they are dealt with at the judgment.

"The first, which we had occasion to describe above, consists of those, whose virtue is ascertained by the fact of their standing the judicial test, when weighed in the balance against the symbol of justice. They receive the promise of resurrection and are at once introduced to the dwelling place of the blessed.[14]

"To the second class belong the souls that are allowed to join the company of the blessed only after their being cleansed and purified from some lighter stains.

"Lastly are reckoned as incorrigible, or twice dead, the souls of unbelievers, the despisers of the gods and such as were guilty of the grossest crimes. These were condemned to endure horrible torments."[15] (See n. **291.**)

The Egyptian eschatology then substantially agrees with the Catholic doctrine on heaven, purgatory, and hell. We prove in another part of our work that such was also the teaching of Plato and Plutarch.

The Italian historian Cesare Cantù has this to say: "As the basis of the Egyptians' religion we find the unity of God, the Supreme Deity. One of their temples bore the inscription: 'I am He who is, was, and shall be. No one can lift up the veil that hides Me.' The human soul never dies; divine intelligence through the primeval revelation made known to man the origin of his soul, its destiny, and the rewards or penalties that await it hereafter."[16]

[12] The Soul and the Body According to Egyptian Traditions, by Baron de Ravisi; p. 173.

[13] Ibid. p. 233.

[14] See Book of the Dead, quoted in n. **281.**

[15] The Religious Belief of Ancient Egypt, by Professor Francesco Rossi, Turin, 1908; pp. 18, 19.

[16] Universal History, French version, third edition, vol.i. ch. xxii.

ADDITIONAL TESTIMONIES ON THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

286. As we said above, there is abundance of material, both monumental and literary, revealing to posterity what the ideas of this people were on the subject of future life. So we have reliable records which let us into the secrets of Egyptian thought and practice of three or four thousand years ago. In ancient times the belief in a future life was so associated with the inhabitants of the Nile Valley, that the Egyptians had the repute of both holding the belief in the soul's immortality and of having themselves communicated that doctrine to other nations.

According to them, everlasting life was to be the lot of the justified. The departed were called the living, and the sarcophagus enclosing their mortal remains was called the "Lord of Life," owing to their belief in a future resurrection as distinctly taught in the Book of the Dead, called by the famous Egyptologist Champollion the Funeral Ritual.

Moreover, the idea of a future judgment for all men was a cardinal point in the Egyptian conception of a future life. This imparted to it a distinctly moral aspect, springing from the thought that the soul had a retributive future before it, which depended on the tenor of its mortal life.

Hence their belief in immortality, and in the judgment to come, exercised a strong and healthy influence on the life of the people; an influence which was, in the course of time, unfortunately neutralized, in a marked degree, by the introduction of animal worship and magical rites, that greatly contributed to rob the doctrine of immortality of its moral energy.[17]

CHAPTER XV

RELIGIOUS BELIEF OF ANCIENT ASSYRIA AND BABYLON

287. We treat of both in this same chapter, as Orientalist historians tell us that their religious belief and worship were practically identical.

Among works on this subject by Catholic Assyriologists, that of Paul Del'homme, O. P., Orientalist Professor at the Catholic Institute of Paris, holds the foremost place. It fully covers the ground of our thesis, as is shown by its perusal. We here allege only a few passages:

"The multiplicity of divinities worshiped by the people of the two ancient monarchies, Assyria and Babylon, was no obstacle

[17] See The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, by Stewart D. F. Salmond, M.A. Book I — The Ethnic Preparation, pp. 37–61.

to their belief in one Supreme Deity, called Marduk in Babylon and Asour in Assyria.'' [1]

''With reference to the moral law governing those ancient peoples in their several obligations toward the Deity, themselves, and their fellow-men, it is important to notice what was their conception or idea of sin, and how it was to be cancelled. The law, they held, comes from the gods, justice comes from heaven, human duties are imposed by divine precepts. Sin, therefore, is the transgression of the law, the violation of justice, the breaking of the divine commands. All that is sinful provokes the anger of the gods, who must be appeased by sorrow and prayer.'' [2]

''Among the consequences of sin they reckoned the withdrawal of divine protection from the offenders, the enmity of the evil spirits, sickness of the body, anguish of the soul, and other calamities.'' [3]

A very complete collection of maxims and principles regarding the belief of the ancient nations of Assyria and Babylon in future life and future retribution has been published by the same distinguished author.

Very valuable and interesting information on the matter that concerns us can be gathered from the perusal of ''Babylonian Religion'' by Professor S. W. King, attached to the Oriental Department of the British Museum.

288. We close our account by quoting the following concluding remarks by Father A. Condamin, S. J., in his lecture on Babylonia and Assyria:

''We have seen that in Babylonian literature, which represents the religious thought of so many generations, not all is moral perversion and superstition; far from it. We cannot but admire the multitude of sublime religious and moral ideas clad in a vesture of splendid poetry. Through the tangle of polytheistic and mythical imaginings is described a God who is the Creator and Governor of the universe, who punishes and pardons sins, with whom man enters into communication by prayer. The obligation of the moral law, the sense of guilt from sins committed, the inevitable retribution are affirmed in a multitude of texts. By the side of truths perceived by the natural power of reason, some faint traces of primitive revelation may have subsisted through the centuries. And God, when He gave to the elect people the privilege of revelation, did not leave the other peoples altogether without light or help. He could not indeed exclude them from His providence in the natural order. Neither did He wish to refuse to them absolutely and wholly that supernatural grace which should help them to live well and reach their supreme end.'' [4]

[1] The Assyro-Babylonian Religion, by Paul Del'homme, O. P. Paris, 1910, pp. 141, 142. [2] Ibid pp. 231–233. [3] Ibid. p. 234.
[4] Babylonia and Assyria, pp. 30–31.

CHAPTER XVI

RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS OF THE ANCIENT PERSIANS, THE HINDUS, THE MEDES, THE CHINESE, THE JAPANESE, AND THE ARABS

THE PERSIANS

289. For an authoritative statement of their religious belief we are indebted to a communication imparted to Mr. Auguste Nicolas by his friend, the celebrated Oriental scholar, Félix Lajard. It is dated from Paris, May 5, 1850. Here is in brief the result of his investigation whilst traveling in Persia:

The religion of the Persians admitted the existence of one Supreme Being, invisible, incomprehensible, eternal; that is, without beginning or end. They believed in the immortality of man's soul, in a future life, in reward or punishment, and in the three kinds of purity needed to be worthy of a recompense; that is, purity in thought, word, and action. And when, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremias after seventy years' captivity,[1] the Lord inspired Cyrus, the Persian king, to deliver the Jews from captivity, and have them rebuild Solomon's temple, destroyed by Nabuchodonosor, he proclaimed the decree of deliverance in the following thoroughly religious language, recorded in 1 Esdras i. 2: "Thus saith Cyrus, king of the Persians: The Lord, the God of heaven, hath given to me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea."

290. We see moreover some special designs of Divine Providence over the Persian nation manifested in the striking fact that, as tradition testifies, the Magi, called by the miraculous star to the cradle of the world's Saviour, were inhabitants of the Persian kingdom.[2]

291. In perusing the record of the ancient Persians we come upon another great type of belief. It is one of the highest and purest of the old Ethnic religions. It is a faith with a singularly clear and decisive doctrine of future retribution, and with a profound conception of right and wrong, good and guilt. It is the faith of a people whose historical connections, both with Jew and with Greek, were such as to give rise to the presumption of a mutual communication of ideas. As we gather from their ancient monuments, after a man's death the reckoning of his life is taken. The conscience of each man confronts him. The good thoughts, words, and deeds of the man of truth appear in the form of a fair maiden of glorious race; for the man of

[1] Jer. xxix. 10; Dan. ix. 2.

[2] Etudes Philosophiques sur le Christianisme par Auguste Nicolas, vol. ii. pp. 499 et seq.

falsehood there is a corresponding deformed apparition signifying the evil things of his earthly life. Three destinies lie before the man. If the good in him prevails over the evil, his way is to paradise, the abode of song, which is the dwelling-place of the deity Abura-Mazda. If the evil is judged to prevail, he sinks into the abyss tenanted by the spirits of evil, down into the darkness, into the world of woe, the dismal realm, down into the house of hell, there to suffer the pains of his sins.

If the balance is equal and the judgment indetermined, there is an intermediate state, in which he is detained till the decision of the last day.

The religion of the Persians, however, was a religion of hope. One of its greatest ideas was that of a new era, and a new world. It looked for the end of the present world, with all its evils, and the establishment of the desired kingdom. It spoke too of a universal judgment to be held by Abura-Mazda when there will be the casting of the spirit of evil, and of all the wicked into hell, and the reception of the good into the fellowship of the God of light and peace into the happiness of the kingdom, in which the sun shines forever.[3]

THE HINDUS

292. As far back as our records carry us, according to Cantù, the Hindu is seen to be a believer in an after-existence. The one certain fact is that, ten to fifteen centuries before Christ, the Hindus looked for a future existence. They entertained the idea of a retributive future. There is a life of happiness, a realm of light in the presence of the gods, for the good; and there is an abyss, a nethermost darkness, for the evil.

Their belief in the future existence is cheerful and hopeful, expressive of a joy in life, and a desire for life. There is no hint of the wish to be rid of the burden of existence; no suggestion of the previous life of the soul, or of the rebirth of the soul in the body of man or beast. The Veda (the Sacred Book or Bible of the Hindus) in its marvelous hymns has nothing to say of transmigration, or any dread cycle of births and deaths, which some misinformed historians wrongly attributed to the Hindu belief. At least such erroneous belief has never been either general or permanent in the Hindu race.

The life in the after-world is characterized as determined by the tenor of the present. It has its certain rewards and punishments, and the man is said to enter, at death, a world which he has made for himself. These rewards and punishments were the things that held the Indian mind. For the wicked man there was the dread of those hells, whose penalties are so prolonged as to be incalculable. For the righteous man there was the hope

[3] See The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, by Stewart D. F. Salmond, M.A. Book I.—The Ethnic Preparation, pp. 78–94.

of the delights of heaven, which, though they might not be the highest possible, yet they were delightful enough.

We see, therefore, prevailing among this ancient Hindu race a pronounced doctrine of future retribution, and for the wicked a terrible one.

The same writer has this to say concerning the natives of Hindustan: "As by reason of their antiquity they were nearest to the primitive and patriarchal traditions, the Hindus preserved many religious and moral truths, such as the unity of God, the fall of man, and the expectation of a coming Repairer or Redeemer. The conviction of the soul's immortality exerted among the Hindu population such an influence as to pervade all their thoughts and sentiments, and dominate their whole life."[4]

THE MEDES

"They, like all ancient nations, were strong believers in the immortality of man's soul. They moreover held that after death the wicked will fall into a dread abyss, where they are confined for ever, and that the good enter the golden portals of heaven."[5]

THE CHINESE

The *Dublin Review* (July, 1884) speaks as follows: "Some writers assert that the Chinese were, in their earliest periods, materialistic and atheistic. But the eminent Orientalist scholar, Charles de Harlez, has attentively examined this question and clearly shown from historical portions of the writings of Confucius, and from the oldest annalists that the primitive religion of the Chinese was more pure than that of any other nation outside of Judea. We may conclude, then, in the words of the Rev. Garret Horner, that the people or tribe has yet to be discovered, which has no belief in God, and the permanent existence of the human soul after death."

THE JAPANESE

The Shinto priests of Japan taught the people the soul's survival after death and the doctrine of future retribution.[6]

THE ARABS

Boulainvilliers, a French author, writes as follows: "These people, trusting the traditions of their forefathers, preserved the memory of the creation and fall of man, believed in the Supreme Lord of the universe, in their accountability to Him and feared His judgments."[7]

In confirmation of the truths established by the preceding au-

[4] Cantù, Universal History, vol. i.

[5] Meagher, Rev. Jas. L., The Religions of the World.

[6] Rev. J. L. Meagher loc. cit. See n. **524** for testimony of St. Francis Xavier on the same subject.

[7] Vie de Mahomet, l. ii, p. 191.

thorities we add the statements of two comparatively recent French writers.

De Broglie: "After the discovery of Oriental philology made known to us the history of many ancient nations, and the missionaries and explorers have overrun every portion of our globe in all directions, no one, I think, who respects himself, will henceforth attempt to hold that there exists now, or has existed in the remote past, any people entirely destitute of religious belief. But it may be safely maintained that, if we except the ancient Hebrews, no nation of antiquity has given a brighter evidence of a firm belief in a supernatural world than the Egyptians. In spite of many grotesque notions, the leading master-truths, such as the existence of a Supreme Deity, the soul's immortality, and future retribution held the foremost place." [8]

De Quatrefages, an eminent ethnologist, after reviewing the records of all ancient nations, concludes as follows: "We look in vain for any people of antiquity that did not profess some kind of belief in man's future existence, and retribution.

"Thus, to allege one instance out of many that might be adduced, the Egyptians held, as attested by their writings and monuments still preserved, that the human soul is immortal, and that in the after life rewards await the just and punishments the wicked." [9]

For an exhaustive and critical treatment of this subject; namely, the religious and moral tenets entertained by all the nations of antiquity, we know no better work than the "Universal History" of Cantù translated from the Italian original into several modern languages. See particularly volume I.

An author that cannot be suspected of partiality toward the Christian religion makes this general admission:

"The ancient Hebrews," writes Voltaire, "and, after them the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, believed in the soul's survival after death and the same belief we find among the Greeks, the Romans, in short, among all the nations of the earth." [10]

Frederick von Schlegel, a convert to Catholicism, makes this appreciation of the value and trustworthiness of the foregoing testimonies:

"We must, in the first place, remember and keep well in our minds that among the nations of antiquity the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not a mere probable hypothesis, which, as with many moderns, needs laborious researches and diffuse argumentations in order to produce conviction on the mind. Nay, we can hardly give the name of faith to this primitive conception, for it was a lively certainty, like the feeling of one's own being, and of what is actually present; and this firm

[8] Problémes sur l'Histoire des Religions.
[9] Quoted by Auguste Nicolas in his Etudes Philosophiques.
[10] Lettres de quelques Juifs.

belief in a future existence exerted its influence on all sublunary affairs, and was often the motive of mightier deeds and enterprises than any mere earthly interest could inspire.'' [11]

CHAPTER XVII

THE IMMORTALITY OF MAN'S SOUL PROVED FROM THE GENERAL CONSENT OF MANKIND

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

293. With a view to exhibit the value of the argument drawn from the general consent of mankind, we prefix to our discussion the following remarks:

The general consent of men, if furnished with certain qualities or conditions, can produce a moral certitude of the truths to which it testifies. If men of different countries, language, education, and social habits agree on some definite belief, it must be said that they represent the voice of nature. Hence the sayings of Cicero, ''The consent of all nations must be held as the voice of nature,'' [1] and ''That on which all men are agreed must be true.'' [2] Another Roman philosopher, L. Annæus Seneca (A. D. 65), bears witness to the same truth, for he thus speaks of the value of universal consent: ''We are wont to give great weight to what all men are agreed upon; and with us it is an argument of truth that a thing seems true to all.'' [3] The following conditions are required to render the judgments of the human race acceptable as channels of truth.

1. They must be long standing, constant, and common among different nations and peoples.

2. The progress of science must have confirmed and ratified, instead of disproving and abolishing them.

3. They must not have originated from ignorance, prejudice, superstition, moral corruption and other similar causes of error and deception.

4. They must not be in conflict with other principles of right reason.

5. They must be conducive to sound morality.

Judgments, beliefs, and truths which are in conformity with the preceding conditions, cannot be erroneous; and such are the judgments testifying to the truth of the soul's immortality. They must have sprung from the light of reason, or from some primitive tradition spread among the nations. Here is a question of an effect that is general, common, constant, and uniform, which consequently demands the action of a cause that is like-

[11] Philosophy of History, Lecture IV, p. 156. [1] Tusc. Disp. l. i, c. xv.
[2] De Natura Deorum l. i, n. xvii. [3] Epist. 117.

wise general, common, constant, and uniform, and that is the light of reason possessed by all rational creatures.

If we could not rely on such testimony, then it would follow that reason itself is an intrinsic and unavoidable source of error, an assertion highly injurious to God, the Sovereign Creator, from whom men receive the gift of reason as a guide to truth. All logicians are agreed on this point. Among the truths treasured up in the conscience of mankind we find their conviction of the soul's survival after death and the belief in future retribution both to the just and to the wicked.

The immortality of the human soul, as we have observed, has always been the universal belief of mankind, a fact admitted by even the bitterest enemies of Christianity. To refer now only to the nations of antiquity, it was the belief of the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Hindus, the Chinese; of the Greeks, the Romans, the peoples of Thracia, the ancient Gauls, the early Germans, the Sarmatians, the Scythians, the Britons, and, in less remote epochs, the same belief was held by the indigenous tribes of South, North and Central America; in short, it was practically the doctrine of all nations received from a primitive tradition.

They also unanimously believed that the soul after death undergoes a judgment, followed by the result of its verdict, which will be either eternal happiness or eternal punishment. They likewise admit the existence of an intermediate state, a veritable purgatory, as Voltaire and Warburton frankly testify. The Egyptians used to place in the mouth of the dead a prayer, by which they asked to be received into the abode of the immortals.[4]

From the beginning men believed that life does not end with death. The belief was not peculiar to any tribe or clan, nor was it confined to one or other quarter of our globe. It was general and ubiquitous. Wherever early man has left legible traces of his existence, whether in the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian, or in cuneiform characters indelibly impressed on baked bricks by the Assyrian, he there left enduring evidence of his belief in a life after death. Primeval divine tradition, handed down from the remotest patriarchal ancestors, explains how man came into this belief, and accounts both for its uniformity and universality. And though this belief was at times mingled with a mass of crude superstitions and grotesque ideas, yet it held its ground: and while many of those silly notions have passed away, it still survives. This undeniable fact shows that the primitive conviction, that man is alive on the other side of the grave, is still a possession of the human race. Arguments cannot destroy it: the skepticism of the learned does not cause it to wilt: the un-

[4] See Bergier's Dictionnaire Theologique, vol. i. p. 494 for additional testimonies.

belief of the elite is only a passing cloud. We may, then, safely conclude that so vital and permanent a phenomenon cannot be due to chance. It is one of the many means employed by Divine Providence for both the temporal and the eternal welfare of man.

294. What has been here asserted in general terms, was demonstrated in detail by the renowned historian Flügel, who, in the course of his inquiries into the remote past, alleges undeniable testimonies from every nation of the globe on their religious belief and moral tenets.[5]

Father Cathrein, S. J., in his notable work on Ethnology, among the religious beliefs and moral sentiments of mankind reckons the following:

The existence of a Supreme Being and Ruler of the universe; the endless life of the human soul; man's accountability to an invisible, omnipotent Judge; the knowledge of the difference or distinction between good and evil; a future recompense to the just and a future punishment to the wicked.

As the conditions needed to render the general consent of mankind reliable as a witness to truth are here fully verified, no fair minded man can reject such a unanimous testimony in behalf of the religious beliefs and moral sentiments stated above as prevailing throughout the populations of the human race, both ancient and modern.

295. Old poets, particularly the Greek and the Latin bards, as well as many ancient sages, are deservedly looked upon as witnesses and guardians of many traditional religious beliefs and moral truths.

By embodying in their classic songs the master moral principles and maxims scattered among their people and received from their remote ancestors, they succeeded in counteracting, to a great extent, the several forms of atheism which threatened to become everywhere prevalent and root out from the human race every vestige of virtue and belief in the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

The primitive traditions on the unity of God, and other principal attributes of the Deity, such as omniscience, goodness, omnipotence, justice; on the immortality of the soul, on retribution after death, on eternal reward or punishments; on the sinfulness of man, on the necessity of expiation, on the expectation of a Divine Redeemer, all these highly beneficial truths became the heirloom of the nations of Europe, as they had been previously of Egypt, Hindustan, and other Asiatic and African regions. Oriental scholars and historians hold that the Mosaic record and other sacred books brought by the exiled Hebrews to Babylonia, Persia, Chaldea, Egypt, and other countries, greatly contributed to confirm the aforementioned traditions and preserve

[5] See Thein's Christian Anthropology.

them from the erroneous ideas and moral corruptions derived from heathen origin and mythological religions.

The late Rev. Henry Formby in the following two works, "Monotheism, the Primitive Religion of the City of Rome" and "Ancient Rome and Its Connection with the Christian Religion," brings forward ample evidence to prove that the association of the ancient Romans with the Hebrews exerted a salutary influence on monotheistic belief and helped to preserve it from erroneous admixtures.

The "Biographical Dictionary of English Catholics" says of Formby's historical works that they are full of wisdom, learning and the result of deep research.[6]

CHAPTER XVIII

TESTIMONIES OF ANCIENT WRITERS

296. Among philosophers, Pythagoras, Plato, Plutarch and their numerous disciples influenced in a remarkable degree the spreading and preservation of the traditional truths previously referred to, owing to the high reputation they had attained as moral teachers, though their teachings were not exempt from several ethical errors.

Yet, as Gladstone remarks in his "Homeric Studies," the primitive brightness of traditional truths gradually grew dimmer, and error, fostered by moral corruption, became more and more prevalent, so that, according to him, the further back our researches extend in antiquity, the more pure do we find the belief of mankind. It is, therefore, a huge historical error to assert that the religion of the most ancient races was polytheistic. The opposite view is the true one, as competent historians of different nationalities have proved. See in this connection the following articles by the distinguished reviewer, Orestes Brownson: "Primitive Man," vol. ix. p. 318; "Primeval Man Not a Savage," vol. ix. 457; "Christianity and Heathenism," vol. x. p. 357.

Among the highly cultured Greeks and Romans, as shown in their writings, we find not only an explicit belief in a continued existence of man's soul, but also the conviction that there will be in the future world a just retribution, an abode of bliss for the good and a place of punishment for the wicked.

Plato writes in one of his Dialogues:

"Glaucon, do you not know that your soul is immortal and never dies?"

"Can you prove it?"

6 Vol. vi. p. 309.

"Certainly—you also can prove it, for it is easily done."[1]

In the same book, Socrates, one of the interlocutors, thus speaks against annihilation: "As the soul cannot be destroyed either by itself or by others, it will exist forever, and is therefore immortal."[2]

In his *Gorgias* (page 343 of the same edition) he writes: "It is absolutely necessary that he who does what is right should become happy and contented; and that he who does wrong should become miserable."

To prove the soul's immortality, besides other telling arguments scattered throughout his works, he urges as an evidence the necessity of retributive justice, and a future existence for an adequate reward of the good, and an equitable chastisement of the wicked. See Patuzzi, *De Futuro Impiorum Statu,* Second Edition, p. 48, where he reproduces the same argument from his distinguished disciple, Aristotle.

Plutarch: "I certainly never denied the perpetual future existence of the human soul." . . . "The present life is a kind of battlefield, and when the fighting is over the combatants receive what they deserved."

In his essay entitled, "The Tardy Vengeance of the Deity," vol. iii. pp. 677, 678, Paris Edition quoted above, he accounts for the fact that sometime vengeance, that is, chastisement, does not overtake the guilty immediately after the commission of crime, saying that the Deity is not afraid that they will escape from its hands.[3]

Diodorus Siculus thus speaks of the ancient Egyptians: "Those that have cultivated piety toward the gods, and practised justice, continence, and other virtues, are received into the company of the good, and remain forever with them."[4]

Strabo: This most ancient geographer and historian says of the Bramins, that they adhered to the doctrine of Plato on Immortality and future retribution.[5]

Marcus Tullius Cicero: This most famous orator and philosopher of Republican Rome reasons thus in his Tusculan Disputations (l. i, ch. 27): "We can find no origin of human souls on earth, for here we can find nothing that has the power of memory, and of mind: a power that can remember the past, foresee the future, and embrace the present; a mind which can be traced only to a divine source. Hence such marvelous endowments must have come to man only from the Deity. Therefore, whatever be that which feels, acts, and lives, it must have a heavenly and divine origin, and for that reason it must last for eternity."

In the same book (ch. 16), he writes: "We believe, owing to the consent of all nations, that human souls are immortal, that

[1] De Civitate, vol. ii. p. 186. Paris, 1883. Firmin-Didot Edition.
[2] Ibid. p. 186. [3] Patuzzi, p. 24. [4] Hist. l, I, n. g. I, Edition as above.
[5] Geogr. lib. xv. India, vol. i. p. 607. Edition as above.

is, possessing a permanent life." Cicero was the only Roman that undertook to base a real and individual existence of souls after death on philosophical grounds.

Annæus Lucanus, in the ninth book of his heroic poem, *Pharsalia,* speaks of the destiny of a righteous soul, whose body was burned on the funeral-pyre: "His soul was not laid in ashes at Pharo, nor could a little handful of dust contain so great a shade. It leaped from the pyre, and leaving the remnant of half-burned bones, sprung toward the vaulted throne of the Thunderer. There dwell the sainted manes, the departed souls gathered in the eternal mansions."

Viscount Bolingbroke thus speaks of the authority of the ancient testimonies quoted above: "The doctrine of the immortality of the soul and of a future state of reward, or punishment, which seemed to be lost in the darkness of antiquity, yet is found to pervade all that we know with certainty. From the moment that we begin to boil down the chaotic legends of ancient history, we find that belief established on the most solid foundations in the minds of the primitive nations known to us."[6]

CHAPTER XIX

DEMONSTRATION OF THE VALUE OF THE GENERAL CONSENT OF THE HUMAN RACE AS AN EVIDENCE AND CRITERION OF TRUTH

297. Among the most precious and morally beneficial truths possessed by mankind from the very dawn of its existence, even to our own day, after that of the existence of God, there is perhaps none that has been held more unanimously than that of the immortality of man's soul. Rev. John Thein in his "Christian Anthropology" (chapter xviii), discusses this subject in a masterly way and vigorously refutes the contrary assertion of the materialistic unbelievers of both past and present time. By way of introduction I quote from Maury the following words: "It is absurd to be obliged to prove to-day that among all races of man of all ages, with a few insignificant exceptions, there exists a unanimous belief that the life of man continues after death." Toward the end of last century, Gustav Flügel, a German savant of high repute, quoted above, proved this truth in a most convincing manner by examining the creeds, customs, funeral rites, and traditions of all the races of mankind. In his learned volume, the result of his long and diligent researches, he proved the general belief in the future, permanent existence of

[6] See Bergier, Dictionnaire Theologique, vol. i. p. 499, note. Quoted by Urraburu, vol. v.

man's soul as held by the Hebrews, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Hindus, the Etruscans, the Phœnicians, the Greeks, the Romans and other nations of olden times.

All scholars interested in ethnological studies will no doubt be highly pleased to learn that what the historian Gustav Flügel did last century regarding the nations of antiquity, another no less learned German scholar has done concerning all the human races, and tribes of our own times.

298. I refer to Father Victor Cathrein, S. J., who lately published in the German language a work entitled "The Unity of the Moral Consciousness of the Human Race." This standard work comprises three massive volumes. The first deals with the civilized peoples of Europe and the uncivilized tribes of Europe, Asia, and northern Africa. The second passes in review the barbaric and savage tribes of South Africa, and North America. The third treats of the savage tribes of South America, Australia, and Oceanica. His statements about the cultured nations of Europe apply to all the civilized populations of other parts of the globe, such as North and South America, and the cultured portion of Asia and Australia. He institutes a thorough inquiry into their religious beliefs and moral sentiments, utilizing all the available and reliable sources of information. He shows their possession of such truths as the following:

Belief in God, in man's endless life in a future world, in the distinction between good and evil actions, in a future retribution of both the just and the wicked, in the voice of conscience revealing the existence of a binding, superior law and in similar other moral judgments.

This most valuable work, a masterpiece in its line, is published by B. Herder of St. Louis, and was reviewed by the able journalist, Arthur Preuss, in his *Fortnightly Review* for August 15, 1915, p. 48. An English translation of this monumental production would form a most valuable contribution to the science of ethnology for English-speaking countries.

299. Here some inquisitive reader may ask: Whence comes this wonderful consent of mankind in admitting practically the same religious belief and moral principles? Catholic writers generally answer as follows: Either it is a universal tradition, coming down from one and the same primeval divine revelation, or it is the testimony of nature, the voice of conscience, which is found to speak the identically same language, and whose verdict, uniform in character, permanent in duration, and universal in its scope and extent, constitutes a safe warrant of the truth it conveys; for such a testimony, ultimately traceable to God, eternal truth, cannot bear witness to falsehood.[1]

It may be safely held that both the promptings of reason and the spread of primitive tradition combine in accounting for the

[1] See Urraburu, Logica, vol. i. p. 630; and Psychologia, vol. vi. p. 544.

marvelous unanimity of mankind's belief in religious and moral truths, as it will be fully proved further on.

300. We may greatly strengthen our argument by recalling the views of a recent writer, George Fell, S. J., who, in his very valuable treatise on the immortality of the soul, alleges as a forcible proof of his thesis the universal testimony of mankind. "We must be able," he writes, "to show that the whole human race as such, notwithstanding many aberrations, always believed in a future life. If we are able to do this, the universal testimony of the human race becomes so overwhelming and decisive a proof for immortality that only fools and bigots will refuse to accept it. Such a testimony of the whole human race is really at hand. It is evidently not necessary for us to go the rounds of the earth with our own reason to collect the testimonies of individual peoples." Father Joseph Knabenbauer, S. J., has done this in his excellent treatise, "The Testimony of the Human Race for the Immortality of the Soul." (Supplement to the *Stimmen aus Maria Laach,* February, 1896.)

The mighty task, then, of ascertaining from reliable sources and authentic documents the beliefs and moral sentiments of mankind from the first dawn of man's history even to our times, has been thoroughly accomplished by the untiring labors and industry of the three German scholars we referred to—Flügel, Knabenbauer, and Cathrein, the two former bearing witness for the nations of antiquity, and the last testifying in behalf of modern peoples.

To reject such overpowering testimony in favor of the immortality of man's soul can be rightly looked upon and branded as one of the most irrational acts an individual can commit.

We find traces of this belief among all the nations, without exception. As Father Knabenbauer remarks, the Nirvana of the Buddhists' creed does not mean, as some writers falsely assert, their credence in the vanishing annihilation of the soul, but rather the reaching of its highest perfection. Future annihilation, held by some authors to be a cardinal doctrine of Buddhism, is by the vast majority of the disciples of that creed understood to be not a return to absolute nothing, but an ecstatic state of perfect contemplation.[2]

301. The following argument is advanced against the proof of the soul's immortality drawn from universal consent: Have there not been at all times in all places, individuals, philosophers, poets and other writers, who denied, or at least doubted, the fact of any future existence? And are not such people to be found in our own days?

Answer: That some individuals may strive to drown their convictions about future life, in order to be left undisturbed in their riotings and debaucheries, we freely admit. But does

[2] See Maher's Psychology, p. 533, 541.

not so unworthy a motive authorize us to suspect the sincerity of their assertions? May they be said to be impartial judges in a matter of such vital importance? Men blinded by passion and swayed by pride may deny even the most evident facts and truths. Not so very long ago there were philosophical schools in Germany that denied the objective reality of the whole visible world. Should this be a reason for asserting that a doctrine so absurd is true, though contradicted by the overwhelming majority of mankind? Or would it be right for a future historian to say that the reality of the visible world was a matter of doubt among the Germans in the twentieth century, because some of their mentally muddled so-called philosophers had held and taught that absurd system?

302. Moreover, as sad experience tells us, through the influence of a wayward will on the intellect men may be induced to deny certain truths which, far from flattering human passions, are intended to curb them. Voluptuous men, for instance, can find much interest in rejecting immortality and its inevitable sequel, future retribution. For that truth is not a mere idle theory, but a belief fraught with consequences of the highest moment. In fact, if I am immortal, an everlasting retribution awaits me, a future lot, the character of which, whether good or bad, depends entirely on the tenor of my present life. Pascal, the great French mathematician and thinker, said that if some of the commandments, such as the sixth, were simply mathematical theorems, instead of being stern moral injunctions, no carnally bent unbeliever would ever combat Christian morality. As to the wrong conceptions concerning the character of forthcoming retribution entertained by ancient pagan sages, and by some savage tribes of more recent times, they furnish no proof against their belief in a future endless existence, for they were indeed mistaken concerning the true nature of the soul, and its mode of existence in the next world, but they were substantially correct as to the fact of the endless existence of man's soul and its retribution in the life to come.

Thus I was told by the Catholic missionaries of the Rocky Mountains that their Indian converts were very agreeably surprised when they learned from the black gowns (the priests) that in heaven the good Indians would find something better than plenty of buffaloes and deer for the hunters and that they would live peacefully with the white man.

He that attempts to rob mankind of belief in immortality sets at defiance the conviction of the whole human race. Without immortality man's high dignity and mental superiority would vanish, and he would be degraded to the level of the beast. His undeniable aspirations to perfect, lasting happiness would be cruel mockery, and his whole life would become a maze of insoluble and inexplicable contradictions. But, on the con-

trary, if his present life be but a passing, brief period of probation, to be followed by a future state, where the infinitely good and just God will apportion to all the reward due to their deeds, then all difficulties disappear, and we have a rational solution of the problem of human existence.

At all events, in our times, in the full brilliancy of Gospel light, we hardly need the testimony of mankind to convince us of the great truths concerning our soul, its origin, destiny, accountability, and future interminable existence, for, as St. Peter assures us, "We have the more firm prophetical word,"[3] that is, the teachings of the Son of God, and, we add, the authority of His infallible Church to interpret them.

CHAPTER XX

ATTITUDE OF MODERN SCIENTIFIC MEN TOWARD THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY AND FUTURE RETRIBUTION

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

303. In the course of my somewhat extensive reading, necessitated by the character of this work, I came across certain startling assertions which I deem it highly important to refute before proceeding any further.

Some of our opponents claim that it is useless to appeal to the authority of ancient poets, sages, philosophers, and historians as witnesses to the truth of the immortality of man's soul and the existence of future, endless retribution, and this, they tell us, for the following reason:

The scientific men of the last two or three centuries have discovered an irreconcilable opposition between the well established data of science and the teachings of Christian philosophy, borrowed, they say, from what is called divine revelation.

Hence, as modern science has done away with the old absurd belief of the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, and with the inextricable Ptolemaic astronomy, with its tangling cycles and epicycles, firmly held by the ancients, as well as by the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, so it has demonstrated as absolutely untenable other teachings handed down from antiquity, such as those concerning the origin, nature, and duration of the human soul, and the assumed existence of a hereafter. On this account, our adversaries maintain, most of the scientific men of the last two or three centuries have adhered to the more rational doctrine of materialism and ceased to believe in Christianity and its heaven and hell.

[3] 2 Peter i. 19.

In this connection I well remember what the materialist Büchner said in his work, "Force and Matter," "three scientists, two atheists." By this bold assertion he meant to convey the impression that many tenets of Christian philosophy and divine revelation have been utterly discredited, and disproved by the discoveries and progress of modern scientific research.

There exists in our days a certain class of writers, who, announcing themselves as champions of science, proclaim in its name and in its authority the irreparable defeat of the old scholastic philosophy, nay, of Christianity itself. Scientific discoveries, we are assured, have undermined the very foundations of religion, such as belief in the existence of God, in the existence of a spiritual, immortal soul, and the like. In short, we must either renounce religion altogether or cast about for a new form of it, more in harmony with the results of the modern interpretation of nature.

304. In the first place, all these assumptions of the supposed achievements and destructive influence of modern scientists are based on two utterly false principles. The first is that philosophical truths belong to the domain of natural, physical science, whilst they constitute the proper object of mental or metaphysical investigations. The second erroneous principle is that the dogmas and truths of religion are to be proved or disproved by empirical or experimental methods, while they can be demonstrated only by appealing to the authority of the Sovereign Creator who revealed them, and to that of the Church which He has appointed to interpret them, a point fully discussed in Part VI, Chapter I.

As to the philosophical truth of the immortality of the human soul, contemporary history relates the utter discomfiture met with by two celebrated men of science, the English professor, John Tyndall, and the renowned American inventor, Thomas A. Edison. Venturing beyond their competent sphere, they both rejected the soul's immortality on the plea of its being opposed to modern science. It is interesting to know the result. At the meeting of the British Association at Belfast in 1874, Tyndall used the presidential chair as a pulpit of materialism; but one had to go no further than his audience to find a man like Maxwell, at least his equal in science, who absolutely rejected his manifesto and dismissed it in a set of doggerel verses.

305. A few years ago the newspapers announced that Mr. Edison had declared himself a materialist. How did this come about? He had satisfied himself that the physico-chemical forces at work in the brain, with the resultant electrical effects, were sufficient to account for all the phenomena of conscious life in men. This was the first public intimation that the distinguished inventor had turned philosopher. But, notwithstanding his well-deserved celebrity in the experimental line, his profession

of materialism left the world wholly unperturbed. No believer saw in it a new menace to his faith; and no unbeliever found in it a new justification of his unbelief. The incident passed with a tribute of comment from the press scantier than would be accorded to a horse-race, or a prize-fight. Cardinal Gibbons, in a short but forcible reply, showed to him that it would have been better for his reputation if he had kept himself within the legitimate sphere of his competence and acted on the old maxim, "The shoemaker should stick to his last."—"*Sutor ne ultra crepidam.*"

The leaders of physics, chemistry, and geology speak with authority as regards the actual facts and empirical laws of their own special provinces. But materialism, atheism, and positivism are not observed facts, but gratuitous inferences from facts, which fall, properly speaking, within the province, not of science, but of metaphysics, as we noticed above.

Even if it were true that modern scientists as one man stood out against Christ and His Church, this would offer no disproof of Christianity. But what are the real facts as stated both in modern and contemporary history? Is it true that the overwhelming majority of men of science are downright unbelievers, rejecting the existence of God, divine revelation, the spirituality and immortality of man's soul, and a future retribution? The contrary is the exact truth, as will be seen from the list, given in the next chapter, a long roll of honor which all sane, conservative minds, and sincere Christian believers will gladly welcome and peruse. From the writers, then, who represent themselves as the champions of science we turn to those who are recognized as such in the largest and truest sense of the word, those to whom the real progress of science is due, the veritable pioneers. These, before all, we desire to question concerning this supposed conflict between scientific research and religious belief. If it exists at all, it will naturally be found most patent to the minds of the first order. And if, on the other hand, we find among the great investigators, the very pioneers of science, many firm and fervent believers, and many of those who admit the fundamental truths on which Christianity is founded, we shall not set a very high value on the pretended antagonism between knowledge and belief, and shall learn what to think of the alleged unanimity of science against religion.

The master minds which have been keenly sensitive to the baneful influence of the destructive criticism of the time and have preserved nevertheless a vivid faith in the supernatural have certainly a *prima facie* claim as trustworthy guides. And it is for this reason that we shall, at the end of the Roll of Honor, present to our readers some of the choicest passages culled from their writings, which bear ample evidence to the deep-rooted faith and thoroughly Christian spirit which inspired them.

They all uphold in their public utterances and learned works this great truth, that Christianity, besides resting on external evidences, such as miracles and prophecies, possesses its own internal grounds of certainty, which nothing drawn from foreign sources can obscure or shake. Christianity is itself the key to both history and science; it is the touchstone of truth; and whatever in history or science is found in conflict with it, is, by that fact alone, proved to be neither genuine science nor authentic history. All this is true only and exclusively of historical Christianity, which is identical with Catholicism.

306. We here append, in alphabetical order, the names of both Catholic and non-Catholic scientists who, during the last two centuries and a half, distinguished themselves in the cultivation of the various branches of natural science, and who at the same time remained staunch believers in Christianity and its fundamental, dogmatic truths, such as the existence of God, the immortality of the human soul, man's moral accountability, and the reality of future retribution.

We mark with an asterisk the names of those to whom the world is specially indebted for important discoveries and successful researches in their respective spheres of knowledge.

For the authentic collection of names deserving of particular mention, suitable to our purpose, we are indebted first to that monumental production, the "Catholic Encyclopedia"; secondly, to Alberi's Italian work entitled *"Il Problema del l'umano Destino."*—"The Problem of Man's Destiny"; thirdly, to a very able volume on "Christianity and the Leaders of Modern Science," by Karl A. Kneller, S. J., English translation by T. M. Kettle, B. S., M. P., from whose pages we also borrowed several very suggestive thoughts.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ROLL OF HONOR

307. Abbadie, * Agassiz, Altum, * Ampère, * Arago, Avogadro. Babinet; * Baer; Barrande; Baum; Baumgartner; Beaumont; * De Becquerel; * Bell; Beneden; * Bernard; * Berzelius; Bessel; Bendant; Bellinger; Binet; * Biot; Bischoff, K.; Bischoff, T.; Blainville; Boerhaave; * Bois-Reymond; Boissier; Bolyai; Boncompagni; Boscovich; Bossat; Boule; * Boyle; Brandes; Braum; * Brewster; * Bridgewater; Brossyniart; * Buckland.

Cameron, Carony, Castracane, * Cauchy, Cecchi, * Chaptal, * Chevreul, Conybeare, * Copernicus, Coulomb, * Cuvier.

* Dalton; * Dana; Daguerre; Daniel; Daubrie; David; * Davy; Dawson; Deusson; Dechen; De Lue; Descattes; Delessert; * Denza; Desains; Despretz; Devitte, C.; Devitte, H.;

Drobisch; Droste-Hulshoff; * Dumas; * Dumont; Dupin; Dupuytren.

Egerton, Ehrenberg, Elie de Beaumont, Enche, Escher, Eschricht, * Euler.

* Faraday, * Faye, * Fizeau, Florens, Fontenelle, Forster, * Foucault, Frass, Franklin, * Fraunhofer, Fresenius, Fresnet, * Freycinet, Friedel, Fuchs.

* Galileo; * Galvani; Gassendi; Gandry; * Gauss; Gautier; Geinitz; Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire; Gergonne; Gilbert; Gisnies; Grumme; Grimaldi; Grassman; Gray, Asa; * Grove; Gruner.

* Halle; Haller; Hanstein; Hausmann; Haug; * Hauy; Herr; Heinrich; Heis; Henry; * Hermite; * Herschel, J. F. W.; Hertz; Hende; * Hirn; Hitchcock; Hladnik; Hufeland; * Hyrtl.

Inghirami.

Jolly, Joule, Jussieu.

* Kelvin, Lord; * Kepler; Ketteler; Kickmeyer; Kircher; * Klaproth; Koller; Kreil; Kronig.

Labord, Lacordaire, Laennec, Lamarck, Lamont, * Laplace, * Lapparent, Larrey, Lutreille, * Lavoisier, * Leibnitz, Leseur, Leunis, * Leverrier, * Liebig, Link, * Linnæus, Linacre, Lossen, * Lyell.

MacCulloch; Madter; Mallard; * Malpighi; * Mariotte; Martius; * Maury; * Maxwell; Mayer; Merian; Mendel; Miller; Milne, Edward; Muller, F.; Muller, J.; Murchison.

* Newton.

* Oersted, Ohm, Olbers, Omalius, Oriani, Owen, Ozanam.

Paley; Palmieri; Parlatore; * Pascal; * Pasteur; Pelletier; Pelouze; Perry; Pfaff, F.; Pfaff, J.; * Piazzi; * Plana; Plateau; Poinsot; Puiseux.

* Quatrefages, * Quenstedt.

Rath; Rauener; * Rayleigh, Lord; Rebeur–Taschwitz; * Regnault; Reichenbach; Relshuber; Respighi; Riemann; * De la Rive; Hollet; * Romanes; Roentgen; Ruete; * Rumford; Rutimeyer.

Santini; Schafhäutl; Schimper; Schnizlein; * Schonbein; Schrank; Schubert; * Schwann; * Secchi; * De Serres; Siemens, W.; Simpson; Spiess; Spring; Stark; Stensen; Stokes; * Stoppani; Studer.

Tart, Tennison, * Thenard, * Torricelli, Triesnecker.

* Vauquelin; Vicaire; De Vico; Vierordt; Volkmann, A. A.; Volkmann, R.; * Volta.

Waagen, Wagner, Weber, Westermaier, * Whewell, Wigard, Wolfe, Woods, Wurtz.

308. If any of our readers should wish to be convinced of the fact that the authors contained in our list are really entitled to a place of honor as distinguished cultivators of the natural sciences, they may easily do so by securing a copy of Father Kneller's valuable work, cited above, in whose pages they will find a

full account of their achievements in their respective fields of scientific investigation.

It is to the credit of these founders of modern science, the master minds of the three preceding centuries, that they had a salutary sense of the limitation of experimental methods. They realized the fact that progress along those lines brings with it no light on the issues of the deepest interest to man, such as the questions of the origin, duration, and destiny of man's soul, which strictly belong to the sphere of mental philosophy, and, in some cases, are the exclusive province of divine revelation, as we have occasion to observe in several parts of this work. As Lord Rayleigh wisely remarks, "The higher mysteries of being, if penetrable at all by human intellect, require other weapons than those of calculation and experiment." [1]

The studies and discoveries of the men we have listed, while they opened the way to all subsequent progress, did not interfere with their belief in God and in the spirituality and immortality of the human soul. Their reverence for the omnipotent Mind that reveals itself in the marvels of nature grew more profound as their knowledge of natural phenomena became deeper.

309. Mathias Claudius, a German physicist of great repute, after convincing himself from attentive study that the most eminent scientists of modern times were devout Christian believers, sets down his impressions in the following characteristic language:

"I cannot conceal my joy when I reflect on the faith of these eminent men. Though religion has nothing to lose or to gain by the opposition or by the favor of the learned, yet when we recollect that a Newton, the most famous mathematician in Europe; a Leverrier, the most renowned astronomer of his times; and other celebrated figures humbly prostrated themselves with childlike submission before the Author of the wonders of creation, I feel my heart overflowing with genuine gladness. I feel cheered to see men of such character and genius not priding themselves on their wisdom, but, hat in hand, humble and eager to learn, drawing close to the altar of the sublime mysteries of God." [2]

Who would not derive from such examples new enthusiasm in the pursuit of those studies, which, while broadening the field of intelligence, strip man of all pretension and confirm him more and more in the belief, reverence and love of Him who created these wonders to give man upon earth a foretaste of the far higher intellectual pleasures that await him in heaven?

310. It has been said that facts are stubborn things; this saying is verified in the statements we are about to make.

Whether it is true that the leading modern scientists have proclaimed the irreparable defeat of religion and Christianity

[1] See Kneller, p. 3. [2] Alberi, p. 123.

by rejecting as a result of their investigations such fundamental truths as the existence of God, the soul's immortality, and future endless retribution, the reader will be able to judge for himself by reflecting on the following principles, sentiments and sayings, gleaned from the utterances and writings of some among the most illustrious names contained in the Roll of Honor given above.

Most of the quotations are taken from Kneller's work already referred to.

1. "The firm conviction, which I have, based on scientific facts, and without any reference to revelation, of personal immortality, and of a higher direction of human life, was my greatest consolation when I clasped the cold hand of my dying mother."—Robert Mayer, p. 20.

2. "May the dream, which we call life, be for you a happy dream, a foretaste of that true life, which we shall inherit in our true home!"—Karl Frederick Gauss, in a letter to his friend the Hungarian Bolyai, p. 44.

3. "At the sight of the Cross planted on this grave in token of our hope, my tongue is silent. May we all lift ourselves in thought to the other side of that tremendous gulf, which separates our earthly sciences, so straitened and limited, from the lofty truths of that divine wisdom, which shall be imparted to all in Heaven."—S. L. Cauchy, in his discourse at the funeral of the great French mathematician, J. P. M. Binet, p. 56.

4. "The study of the heavens has only confirmed and deepened my faith in Christianity."—Leverrier, p. 95. (See article in the "Catholic Encyclopedia" on this distinguished man.)

5. "There are realities other than the body, other than material things, other than this glittering world of stars. There is thought; there is intellect, and a higher intellect from which ours is derived. I accept the traditional formula: 'Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth.'"—Herve Faye, p. 100.

6. "It has been said that natural sciences hide away from view the things of God, and draw men to atheism. The true and genuine champions of science answer that such charges are absolutely groundless. Of astronomy in particular we hope to show that exactly the opposite is true; and that appeal should be made to it to restore and confirm those beliefs, which are rightly esteemed the noblest possession of mankind."—J. H. von Madler, p. 102.

7. "I can never cease thanking Almighty God for the inestimable gift of my unshaken faith in the Catholic Church, in whose bosom I am firmly resolved to live and die, with the lively hope of attaining the happiness of life everlasting."—Volta, p. 117.

8. "The progress of science has tended to deepen the distinction between the visible part of man, which perishes before

our eyes, and that which we are ourselves: and to show that his personality, with respect to its nature as well as to its destiny, lies quite beyond the range of science.''—Clerk Maxwell, in his essay entitled ''Natural Science and Immortality,'' p. 140.

9. Dr. Louis Fizeau thus spoke of his friend C. Antoine Becquerel: ''At the advanced age of over ninety years, he peacefully expired with the serenity of a philosopher, the tranquillity of soul of a good man comforted by his trust in God, and the belief in the immortal hope of a Christian.''—P. 173.

10. ''The Catholic religion has ever been the inspirer of my studies; and fortified by its unspeakable consolations, I hope to pass from earth to eternal peace.''—Louis Palmieri, p. 175.

11. ''There is a numerous group not in the slightest degree entitled as physicists, who assert that not merely life, but even volition and consciousness are mere physical manifestations. Into such errors no genuine scientific man will fall, so long, at least, as he retains his reason. Such aberrations are to be attributed to that credulity which is characteristic alike of ignorance and incapacity.''—P. G. Tait, p. 177.

12. ''In Louis Jacques Thenard there was something greater than his sublime intellect and boundless knowledge; there was a heart profoundly Christian. He submitted his intellect to the dogmas of the Church, as he submitted his will to her precepts. In losing Baron Thenard I have lost one of the best friends of my poor.'' So spoke the rector of S. Sulpice at his funeral.—P. 183.

13. ''The immortal, immaterial free soul, such is the chief aspect under which life presents itself to our study.''—Jean Baptiste A. Dumas, p. 189.

14. ''Some would-be scientists have attempted to exhibit physical science as the stay and support of materialism. This has been the language of mere dilettantes, whose mental equipment can bring them no farther than the outer fringe of science.''—Julius von Liebig, p. 196.

15. ''I, as a man who has devoted his days [more than 80 years] to the pursuit of truth, feel impelled to declare that I have never been either a materialist or a skeptic.''—Michel Eugène Chevreul, ultra centenarian. (Born 1786—died 1889—aged 103.)

16. ''We are not in this world merely to enjoy ourselves. No—we are here, religion tells us, to love and serve God; we are here, science tells us, to understand and admire the will and the ideas of God.''—Ernest Mullard, p. 246.

17. ''One of our first duties is to cultivate a sense of the goodness and wisdom of the Author of nature by a continuous study of the work of His power.''—George Cuvier, p. 251.

18. ''His pure and immortal spirit was able, without anguish or dismay, to take its leave of the world, the splendors and

harmonies of which he has so nobly sought to reveal. His soul appeared, no doubt, with confidence before that Sovereign Judge, in whom he had always placed his hopes and faith.''—From the eulogy pronounced at the funeral of Elie de Beaumont by his friend, J. B. A. Dumas, p. 255.

19. ''I propose to lay before you some considerations which will show how unjust is the charge so commonly made that the articles of our Christian Faith are in contradiction with the established results of science.''—From the speech delivered before the Belgian Scientific Academy by D'Omalius, p. 270.

20. ''In direct opposition to the materialists I find myself compelled to postulate in man the existence of a spiritual principle, without which the facts of conscious perception are inexplicable.''—Chr. George Theodore Ruete, in his inaugural address on the existence of the soul regarded from the standpoint of science, delivered at the University of Leipzig, p. 315.

21. ''It is just because I have thought and sought so much that I believe with the faith of a Breton peasant: if I had thought more and studied more, I would have come to believe with the faith of a Breton peasant's wife.''—Answer of Louis Pasteur to a student who had asked him how it was that after so much study and research he could still remain a believer in Christianity, p. 327.

In this connection it is interesting to remember that Renan, the infamous writer against the divinity of Christ, was appointed to refute Pasteur's celebrated address pronounced on the occasion of his reception into the French Academy. In this inaugural speech the latter vigorously combated the positivistic doctrine which attempts to account for the existence and government of the world without the intervention of an omnipotent Creator and Sovereign Ruler. The distinguished writer Melchior de Vogue, in giving the result of this trial of arms, said that the crystal argumentation of Renan, the shallow dilettante, came in contact with the iron armor of the earnest savant Louis Pasteur; hence we are not surprised at the result—the crystalline weapon was pulverized and the iron armor of Pasteur added another laurel to his victorious combats. P. 329.

22. ''When we enter within the circle of immortal life, we find eternal joy. Yes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, what hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, that is the bliss which I hope to possess when I have put off the flesh.'' Von Martius, p. 357.

23. ''Natural science is able, above all, to expose the contradictions of materialism, and to show its untenableness. In point of fact, science rightly directed is the best and most stable barrier against error, leading us to recognize the universe as the temple of the Almighty.''—Andreas von Baumgartner, p. 400.

Not to trespass on the space allotted to this third part of my

book, I here end my quotations. Those that I have alleged and others—which might be multiplied almost indefinitely—bear undoubted witness to the belief of prominent scientific men of different nationalities in the existence of a Supreme Creator and Sovereign Judge of mankind, and in the spirituality and immortality of the soul of man.

We are therefore justified in reckoning the leading scientists of the present and the last two centuries as valiant supporters of the endless duration of the human soul and of the everlasting retribution awaiting man in the world to come.

311. The testimonies we have alleged cannot but convince every fair-minded man that all real reliable data of science, instead of opposing, only confirm the truths of faith. If apparent contradictions are met with, it is either because writers attribute to the Sacred Scriptures what they do not convey, or accept as a certain result of science a mere hypothesis which may sooner or later be set aside on further investigation. There may be at times a divergence between theologians and scientists, but never between approved theology and true science, or between the verdict of nature and the truths of revelation. Truth can never be in conflict with truth, nor can one truth be more or less true—if a truth at all—than another. Religion, if religion, is true; and science, if science, is also true. How, then, is it possible that there can be any contradiction between them.[3]

The unanimous verdict of the numerous distinguished scientists recorded above is to the effect that natural science can allege no fact, law, or discovery antagonistic to the teachings of divine revelation on man's destiny, his soul's immortality, and the necessity of future retribution.

It may now be interesting to turn to science herself and ask her whether she can say anything positive concerning the mighty problems of human life, that is, whether such investigation falls within the sphere of her competence. The answer is that she cannot say anything definite on that subject. Her field is limited to the study of the phenomena that can be reached by observation and experiments. The spiritual and the supernatural world does not acknowledge the potency of blowpipes, crucibles, retorts, or chemical and spectrum analysis. The speed of thought is far too swift for the electrical current to overtake it, and its realm too far removed for the strongest telescope to reach it. In short, observation and experiment, the two great instruments of science, are utterly useless when man has to deal with his soul, the purpose and duration of its existence, and what lot may await it in the world to come. If she cannot prove life beyond death, neither can she disprove it. Her instruments of research are indeed very powerful, but they are

[3] See Vatican Council, Ch. 4, D. Enchiridion, p. 476; Brownson's Works, vol. ix. p. 549; The Conflict of Science and Religion, p. 547.

utterly impotent when prying into the spirit-world. Here it is well to remember that too often it is taken for granted that in religion we must walk by faith, whereas in science one can always walk by sight. But the truth is that the man of science, no less than the man of religion, is compelled in many instances to walk by faith and by authority, the very sources of knowledge which some would-be scientists set aside as unreliable. As a matter of fact, science cannot take the first steps without performing several acts of faith. She must assume that the universe is an objective reality; that its phenomena are intelligible; that truth is attainable; that man's mental and sensitive faculties in their normal condition enable him to reach the truth; that many of the discoveries made by scientific pioneers and the many data and facts ascertained by them can be relied upon as trustworthy. Though this is quite true, yet it must be admitted that there is no more trustworthy voice than that of revealed religion. The doctrine of immortality is certainly a part of the Christian religion distinctly proclaimed by Jesus Christ, its Founder. But, as we have shown, men believed in immortality long before Jesus came. Hence the idea that man survives death is not a novelty introduced by Christianity. It is taught, to be sure, in the Hebrew Scriptures, and much more plainly in the writings of the New Testament; but the arguments for immortality are not confined to the Bible. From the remotest ages of history, arguments for immortality have been advanced by the sages of antiquity, which satisfy philosophic and scientific minds. Hence belief in a life to come is held as an heirloom by the whole human race. We may call it a philosophic, or a historic and religious belief. Probably we may name it best if we simply designate it as a *human* belief; a belief that is the birthright of every people, nay, of every man born into our world.

CONCLUSION OF PART III

312. Dear Reader: After a time, which might be shorter than we think, the structure of our material frame being destroyed by death, our soul shall find itself in the state of separation, a quite novel manner of existence. What is extremely important is that when the solemn moment comes our soul should appear before our Supreme Judge, not sullied with the canker of grievous sin, but adorned with the bright robe of sanctifying grace, so as to be worthy of the inheritance, as St. Peter assures us, "incorruptible and undefiled and that cannot fade,"[4] reserved in Heaven "to His faithful servants by Our Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to whom be honor and glory forever! Amen."

This third part of our volume having shown that God's sanc-

[4] 1 Peter i. 4.

tion is eternal, and that our soul, the recipient of either reward or punishment, according to its deserts, is immortal, we are now prepared to ascertain, in the following part, the nature, character, and qualities of the eternal remunerative sanction made known to us by God's revelation, interpreted and expounded by His infallible representative, the Catholic Church, and fully approved by the voice of reason.

PART IV

THE REMUNERATIVE SANCTION

As both the soul and the body concur, with the aid of divine grace, in the great work of sanctification, so divine goodness and justice have promised and reserved to both these constituents of man's personality a special heavenly recompense. We are now concerned with the treatment of what constitutes both the primary or essential, and the secondary or accidental reward of the human soul, leaving the discussion of the recompense of the human body to subsequent separate chapters.

CHAPTER I

THE HAPPINESS OF THE SOUL

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

313. I need not stop to prove the existence of heaven. It is not heaven that must be proved, but hell. What terrifies the human mind, what confronts it as an apparent impossibility and a downright contradiction, is only the thought of hell. Hence it is the stern reality of this terrible dogma that must be supported, as we shall see, by irrefutable proofs.

All the divine attributes demand and proclaim the existence of heaven. Abolish heaven and what remains of the groundwork of God in bringing humanity into existence? The few days of a mortal life, filled more with sorrows than with joys, and after, the gloom of nothingness in the end. What becomes then of God's power, wisdom, promises, and love? Admit heaven and all is explained—the sorrows of life shall be consoled, the labors rewarded, virtue crowned, all human aspirations completely gratified.

314. Creation and Redemption, liberty and grace, the natural and the supernatural order, the action of Divine Providence in the history of the world as well as its influence over the hearts of men, to what do they finally tend? To happiness in life eternal. And the establishment of God's Church, the institution of the sacraments, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and His permanent abiding in their legitimate successors, the preaching of the Gospel to the nations—do not all these great events point to the same lofty end, the glory of God and the endless happiness of man? It is evidently for us, for

our eternal salvation, that God's only begotten Son descended from heaven, deigned to live and converse with men, and died on the cross to save them from perdition and bring them to the enjoyment of eternal bliss. This bliss chiefly consists in the beatific vision, the "happy-making" sight, by which the souls of the just behold God's majesty, and His infinite perfections. As the schoolmen explain, the souls of the just indeed enjoy perfect beatitude and contentment from beholding the very essence of God, though, owing to their limited faculties, they cannot totally comprehend it. As St. Thomas writes in his immortal *Summa Theologica: "Electi Dominum vident totum, sed non totaliter."* [1] God gives Himself entirely to a glorified soul in heaven, and through the aid of the light of glory *(lumen gloriae)*—such a soul possesses all God *(totum)* but obviously not wholly *(totaliter)*. Or, to put it in a different way, the blessed soul, in embracing God, most undoubtedly embraces and enjoys an infinite good, but in an essentially finite degree, suitable to its limited faculties, and proportionate to its merits. Even the humanity of Christ does not receive divine gifts and graces infinitely, for, as St. Thomas teaches,[2] the humanity of Christ, on account of its union with God, possesses not an absolute but a relative infinity, for human nature, however exalted, cannot be capable of any act that involves infinity. Hence the following proposition was condemned at the Council of Basel with the approval of Pope Nicholas V: "The soul of Christ sees God as clearly and intensely as God sees Himself." For the same reason, while love is infinite on the part of God, the Giver, it is necessarily finite on the part of the creature, the recipient.

A still fuller explanation of this matter is furnished by the same Angelic Doctor who, answering his own objection: "It seems that those who see the Divine Essence, comprehend God," writes as follows: "Comprehension is twofold; in one sense it is taken strictly and properly, as when a being is entirely included in the one that comprehends it. In this sense God cannot be comprehended by any created intellect, whether angelic or human, for the simple reason that an infinite being cannot be comprised in a finite one. In another sense comprehension is taken more largely, and it means that the object aimed at is actually reached or attained. In this sense God is comprehended by the blessed, and comprehension becomes for them the full realization of their hopes." [3] Such is the explanation we may give of St. Paul's words: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend." [4] What St. Paul says of the impossibility of his attaining the perfection of Christ may be allegor-

[1] P. i, q. 12, a. 7.
[2] P. iii, q. 10, a. 1.
[3] P. i, q. xii, a. 7.
[4] Philipp. iii. 12.

ically applied to the inability of finite, limited creatures to comprehend the infinite perfections of God. God's vision implies three special gifts. Because the elect see God, they possess Him as present, they perpetually retain the power to see Him, and enjoy Him, as the ultimate and perfect fulness of all the goods that they can possibly desire.

What idea, then, should we form of life eternal? Our life will then be like the flower in full bloom, or like the fruit of supernatural grace, which the Lord planted in the human soul, sanctified and brought to its full maturity in the celestial paradise.

In the language of St. Augustine, "The glory, the grandeur of the contemplation of God's majesty, which are to constitute our happiness, baffle all description, surpass all our brightest anticipations, and vastest desires. We may merit such happiness, we may one day actually possess it, but neither here nor hereafter shall we ever be able to fully comprehend it."[5]

315. Among the authorized exponents of the Church's belief on any question referring to her teachings must be reckoned the Catechism of the Council of Trent. Following is its explanation of the Twelfth Article of the Apostles' Creed—I believe in life everlasting: "Heavenly happiness is defined and described by the Fathers as the possession of all goods, and the exemption from all evils."

A very correct and comprehensive idea of heaven was given by St. Bernard, the learned abbot of Clairvaux, when he said that it contains all goods and excludes all evils. Developing this thought we may ask the Christian soul: What do you desire? There all your wishes will be completely gratified. Are you yearning for beauty? God is infinite beauty, and His elect, the saints, Christ assures us in His Gospel, "Shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[6] Are you longing for a long, healthy life? There you will possess eternal health. Are you hoping for a full gratification of the faculties of the soul, and of the senses of the body worthy and proper of that place of peerless purity and holiness? The holy prophet David gives you, in God's name, this solemn assurance: "They shall be inebriated, O Lord, with the plenty of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure."[7] Do you aspire to knowledge and wisdom? You will forever contemplate God's own infinite wisdom, and become wiser than any mortal, past, present, or future, Solomon himself not excluded. Are you anxious to have many friends? God and His angels and saints will cherish for you greater friendship and love than has ever been bestowed on men upon earth. Are you fond of lofty dignities? The blessed in heaven are honored as kings, and exercise greater power than has ever been wielded by earthly monarchs. Lastly, do you expect security and stability in the

[5] Serm. xxxvii. [6] Matt. xiii. 43. [7] Ps. xxxv. 9.

possession and enjoyment of all your goods? You will have them, for Christ said of His elect: "They shall not perish forever and no man shall pluck them out of My hand."[8] "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you."[9]

It is well to recall here the distinction between the essential, and the accessory happiness of heaven. The former consists in the contemplation of God, and the consequent enjoyment of His infinite beauty and perfections. The latter comprehends all other delights, particularly those resulting from the union of the risen, glorious body with the blessed soul. The elect, through God's vision, whilst retaining their own nature, shall assume a certain marvelous, almost divine form; a sublime truth conveyed to us by the Evangelist St. John: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is."[10] The Secret of the First Mass on Christmas Day seems to insinuate the same wonderful transformation effected by the beatific vision: ". . . that through Thy grace we may be clothed with the form of Him in whom abides with Thee our own human substance." A like sentiment we find expressed in the Secret of the Second Christmas Mass: ". . . that, as He, who was born a man, shone at the same time as God, so His earthly human nature may bestow upon us what is divine." A similar thought is evidently conveyed by St. Peter, who writes: "That by these (most precious promises) you may be made partakers of the divine nature."[11] St. Leo the Great thus speaks of the principal effect of Holy Communion: "By partaking of the body and blood of Christ we are transformed into what we receive."[12] If this happens in the Eucharistic union upon earth, a far more perfect transformation must take place in heaven, by the soul's union with God resulting from the beatific vision.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS SEEN THROUGH THE BEATIFIC VISION

316. It is highly interesting to examine somewhat in detail what are the objects seen and enjoyed by the vision of God.

"To see God!" A few simple words, but who will be able to fathom their meaning, who can realize what they contain? "We are incapable," writes St. Augustine, "of speaking in a befitting manner of this vision, yet we cannot be altogether silent about it."[1] This vision is, in the first place, a full and a clear knowledge of God, that is, the highest knowledge of the sublimest ob-

[8] John x. 28. [9] Ibid. xvi. 22 [10] 1 John iii. 2.
[11] 2 Peter i. 4. [12] Serm. de Passione, 14. [1] De Civit. Dei. i, ix, n. xii.

ject, causing the greatest happiness in the beholder. The blessed shall see in God all the mysteries of faith, all the marvels of creation, and all the events of the human race from its origin to the day of the last judgment. "I will behold Thy heavens," writes the Royal Psalmist, "the works of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast founded." [2] And all this the blessed will know more clearly, more thoroughly than has been done or could ever have been done by the most learned men that ever lived upon earth.[3]

When we see a man most powerful and exceedingly wise, we behold indeed his external appearance, but we cannot see the beauty and perfection of his soul. Not so with the blessed. In seeing God, they see at the same time all His infinite perfections. Hence they behold in Him the source of all wisdom, goodness, truth, beauty, sweetness, and joy. They see the immensity, the greatness, the sublimity of His majesty and the immutable eternity of His existence. They see the wisdom that conceived all things to be brought into existence and the omnipotent power that made them and the goodness which moved Him to do all things for man's sake. They see the sublimest mysteries of our holy Faith—the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, the Blessed Eucharist, all the truths of the Sacred Scriptures, all that on earth was the object of their faith.

317. Another source of untold happiness will be the contemplation of the City of God, the divine abode, in which He displays the greatness of His magnificence, of which the prophet tells us, "Only there our Lord is magnificent," [4] meaning thereby that all the magnificence exhibited by the Creator in the world we inhabit bears no comparison with that of the mansion of the blessed. There they will behold the number, merits, glory, and beauty of all the just, and admire in all the goodness and mercy of God that created, sanctified, and finally brought them to the enjoyment of heavenly bliss.[5]

Moreover, they will know God's providential disposition, order, and regulation of all human events, from the very beginning of the human race even to its earthly termination; the history of each individual, thus embracing in their vision all that happened in the flights of centuries, from the beginning to the end of the present world.

There exists a most cogent reason for such knowledge of men's doings, which will also be known to the reprobates at the last judgment, and it is this: All men must then be convinced of and acknowledge the justice of God in awarding to each individual what he merited in his lifetime, either recompense or punishment, as the case may be. And this manifestation will be so evident, so striking that even the reprobates will be compelled

[2] Ps. viii. 4.
[3] St. Thomas. Suppl. p. 3, qu. 92, art. 3.
[4] Is. xxxiii. 21.
[5] St. Thomas, Suppl. p. 3, q. 87, a. 3.

to exclaim, in the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right,"[6] a truth which shall have been already recognized and confessed by the reprobate soul on the manifestation of the sentence pronounced against it by the Supreme Judge at the particular judgment. Here some one might ask, What proof, what warrant have we for the truth of what is asserted above? To answer this question we have only to quote St. Paul's words, who thus speaks in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "Judge not before the time; until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."[7] Now, in order that God's justice toward each human individual should be manifest to all, it will be necessary for them to know what Divine Providence did for each of them, how often God favored them with divine inspirations and inducements to a virtuous, holy life; how many means and occasions of salvation He offered to them; how many times He called them to repentance; and with what patience and longanimity He tolerated sinners in their reckless career. The knowledge of all these things is necessary for arriving at a just appreciation of each one's merits or demerits, and as a means of fully recognizing and vindicating the wisdom, goodness, and justice of Divine Providence in the government of the world. If, as theologians tell us, even the reprobates, for the reasons alleged, will possess this knowledge, in whatever manner God may impart it to them, it is evident that the blessed, illumined by the light of glory, will understand and know the secrets of hearts in a manner immeasurably more perfect. And whilst on one hand the reprobates will derive from such knowledge only vain and tardy repentance and bitter remorse, the blessed on the other hand will experience inconceivable happiness and be moved to sing with deepest gratitude eternal hymns of thanksgiving to the Deity, by whose mercy they escaped eternal misery and obtained everlasting bliss. "The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever."[8]

It has been said: Eternity is indeed very long. Is it not possible for the blessed to become at length wearied of the same everlasting contemplation? I remember having read of an infidel who said that, if there be any future life, he would prefer hell to the interminable chanting of psalms in heaven.

318. Whoever speaks thus has not the remotest idea of what heaven is. If one imagines that the blessed will be able to see, at a single glance, all that can be seen in God, and that for all eternity they will only behold the same sight over and over again, there might be some reason for anticipating the possibility of weariness in the beatific vision. But, on the contrary, as God is infinite, the more the soul sees of Him, and of His inexhaustible beauty and perfections, the more it will desire to see. Then

[6] Ps. cxviii. 137. [7] 1 Cor. iv. 5. [8] Ps. lxxxviii. 2.

only will it cease to wish to see more, when it will have seen all that can be seen in God. To do this, the creature itself will need to be infinite, which is absolutely impossible and supremely absurd. And what happens here on this earth, though deservedly called an exile and a valley of tears? Do people generally get tired of living on it? Are they so very anxious to quit it? How then can we believe that the blessed, enraptured by the exquisite delights of the beatific vision, can ever become weary of it?

CHAPTER III

THE BEATITUDE OF THE INTELLECT

319. As St. Thomas and other eminent theologians tell us, an abundant source of happiness for the human intellect will be the perfect knowledge of the wonders of creation and all its parts. If so much pleasure is derived in this life from the study of the several branches of science, both physical and mental, immensely greater will be the delights reserved to the blessed from the full comprehension of the laws and phenomena of nature; a knowledge which costs them no labor, which, we shall soon show, surpasses all the scientific attainments ever acquired by mortals in the present world. The Royal Psalmist, referring to the astounding marvels of starry space, rejoices at the thought that he will be able to contemplate and grasp their full grandeur and beauty in the life to come: "I will behold Thy heavens, O Lord, the works of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast founded."[1]

Out of the many millions of human beings now walking the earth, how few have the capacity, leisure, and the means of studying the marvels of the universe! Here we may ask: For what purpose did Almighty God call into existence the countless millions of material and irrational beings that surround us, whether they be the microscopic infusoria, ten thousand of which might march abreast through the eye of a needle, or giant suns, dashing with lightning speed through the realm of starry space? As has been shown in Part I, He created them for His own glory. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself."[2] Secondarily, He made them for the service, pleasure, and happiness particularly of His elect, who use them not to offend their Divine Benefactor, but to praise and glorify Him.

This thought opportunely reminds me of the sentiment expressed by the author of the "Imitation of Christ": "Truly a lowly rustic that serveth God is better than a proud philosopher who pondereth the course of the stars and neglecteth him-

[1] Ps. viii. 4. [2] Prov. xvi. 4.

self",[3] that is, fails to render to his Creator the homage of praise, honor and submission due to Him. As we have remarked, it is not in the present life, but in the next that it will be given to the just to enjoy to their heart's content the marvels contained in the countless creatures that surround us. To understand the astonishing feats of human intelligence displayed by the blessed in heaven, let us make a supposition.

Behold gathered in a vast library all that the most distinguished savants have written on the sciences and philosophy, on history, on the fine arts from the beginning of the world up to our times. Then let us suppose that Almighty God should say to a man: "I will give you an intellect capable of mastering all that learning, and such a retentive memory that you will be able to recall at will all that vast knowledge." Would not this man exhibit so prodigious a learning as will never be witnessed on earth?

Let us also suppose that the Lord were to bestow on a soul so privileged the artistic power of a Raphael, the grand conceptions of a Michelangelo; the ability of a Mozart for musical composition, who can describe the ecstatic feelings of joy and happiness thrilling through that fortunate soul!

320. Now this is precisely the wonder that Almighty God performs in heaven, not only in behalf of one single man, or individual soul, but of all the elect. Yes, the lowliest among them will possess more knowledge and know a greater number of truths than were ever attained by the most learned men on earth, including King Solomon himself, though according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, he was the wisest of men.[4]

The most humble of the blessed will relish all the charms ever enjoyed by all the artists put together, for the Lord will give to human intelligence a supernatural light, which will render it capable of perceiving at a glance the good, the beautiful and the true in all their splendor.[5]

CHAPTER IV

THE BEATITUDE OF THE WILL

321. As truth and knowledge form the object of the intellect, so good and love constitute that of the will. It is plain that the good possessed in heaven by the blessed could not be greater or more perfect, because it is God Himself, the infinite, immense, perfect good and the inexhaustible source of all the delights of paradise. As we showed in Part I, it is the possession of such good, the last and supreme end of man, that makes him per-

[3] Book i, ch. 2. [4] 3 Kings iii. 11, 12.

[5] See T. Hamon, S.J., Au De Lá du Tombeau (Beyond the Grave), p. 295.

fectly happy and fully contented. As we need not repeat here what we have already stated, we proceed at once to consider what will be the love of the blessed toward the Lord, and why they feel themselves irresistibly drawn toward Him. From the perfect vision of God, and the undimmed contemplation of His divine essence and attributes, there springs in the elect a love so attractive as to be absolutely irresistible, though leaving in them intact the exercise of their liberty. It is clear that the greater the good the greater is the creature's tendency toward it. Now, as God is a good of infinite perfection, excellence, and beauty, so man's highest happiness cannot but be fully realized in possessing and loving Him with the most ardent affection of which creatures can be capable. From the intense love of the blessed toward their Lord, there arises in them an indescribable joy in the production of which four elements or conditions concur; namely, the matchless beauty of the object, its extreme amiability, the complacency in loving it, and the delight arising from the knowledge and affection of such an object.

Among the perfections found in created things is the power of giving us pleasure, of making us happy. Each being has a degree of perfection and beauty proper to its nature. The Alpine glow of the Swiss mountains fills us with a delightful astonishment. A Dante, a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Raphael, a Murillo inspire us by their astounding creations; we are charmed and carried away by the symphony of a Beethoven. Now, all this is but a drop in the ocean of beauty, the beatific power found in God. From this ocean we shall drink for all eternity, without ever exhausting it, because it is infinite. The ocean is diminished if but one drop is drawn from it. Yet all the joys, raptures, and delights derived by the blessed from God's vision for all eternity shall not take from Him one atom of His capacity to make happy myriads of His rational creatures.

Besides the joys produced by divine love, as explained above, there are in store for the blessed other delights arising from the love of their associates in the heavenly mansions; joys and delights so exquisite as to be inferior only to those produced by the possession of God Himself. As to themselves, they will rejoice principally, of course, in the participation in God's own happiness, which will forever banish all grief, pain, anxiety, and solicitude. To all this is added the crowning glory of heaven, the eternity of its duration, for they will have a most certain assurance that such a happiness will never be lost.

As nothing will be more sad and painful to the reprobates than the conviction of the eternity of their torments, so, on the contrary, nothing will contribute more to the completeness and perfection of the joy of the blessed than the clear knowledge of its everlasting duration.

As there is such a thing as anticipated happiness, when it is a question of its future certainty, guaranteed by God's infallible promises to all His faithful servants, so it must be a source of the sweetest gladness for all sincere believers to think often of those heavenly treasures, which, as the Divine Saviour assures us, neither the moth nor rust consumes, and to cast longing glances toward that blessed region, where sorrow is unknown, where the just drink of the torrent of pleasure and are inebriated with the plenty of the house of God.

When the last word of the sentence at the dread tribunal shall have been uttered, and, through God's infinite mercy, should it be a sentence of salvation, our soul's jubilant gladness shall know no bounds. We shall then reach the land unswept by storms, we shall enter the city and temple of the Lord of the universe, fresh from the clasp of death and rejoicing for our final victory over sin. The beloved of long ago will gather about us and give us a cheering welcome. They will meet us at the landing on the shore of our eternal home. They will greet us, speak our name and lead us to the feet of Jesus, who will confess us before the angels, and bestow on us the conqueror's crown, amidst the applause and exultation to which only the inhabitants of paradise can give utterance. Then we shall hear in heaven the secret words which St. Paul assures us "It is not granted to man to utter" (upon earth).[1]

That such is the state of the blessed can be further demonstrated by the following considerations:

Should the elect be subject to sadness, sorrow, or grief, it might be for one of the following reasons: Either for the sake of God on account of the many offenses committed against His sovereign majesty, or because of their knowledge of the loss of some of their relatives and friends.

322. In the first place, the blessed cannot be saddened for God's sake, for all the sins of men, even indefinitely multiplied, can cause no affliction to Him, nor diminish in the least His infinite joy. And though God's external glory seems to be in a manner impaired and obscured by the sins of men, yet His wisdom and power will derive great good even from them and in spite of them. By tolerating the sinners' wicked lives in this world, God displays in a marvelous manner His attributes of goodness, longanimity, forbearance, and patience; and by punishing obstinate, rebellious sinners in the next world He manifests in a most striking manner the attributes of His justice and omnipotence. God is patient, says St. Augustine, because He is eternal. Having a whole eternity in which to avenge the wrongs done to His supreme majesty, He can well afford to tolerate the sinner's iniquitous conduct, for the brief span of the few years of his mortal life. "The Lord shall laugh at him [the sinner]

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 4.

for He foreseeth that his day shall come."[2] Hence the blessed can have no reason or cause of sadness on account of men's offenses committed against God, whom they know to possess infinite joy, happiness, and delight, of which no rebellious creature can ever deprive Him. Hence all the Scriptural expressions referring to God's sadness, sorrow, regrets, etc., are invariably to be taken in a metaphorical sense; they are, so to speak, a human language, intended to make men understand the gravity of sin, which would cause sadness, sorrow, and grief even in God Himself, if He were capable of such human afflictions.

The blessed, it is true, are exceedingly displeased with sin and hate it most vehemently. But there can be detestation and hatred of evil without any grief or sadness of the soul. Hence God, though hating sin with infinite hatred, is not, and cannot, on that account, be afflicted with any sorrow or grief.

323. Here it might be objected that God indeed cannot be subject to grief or sadness of any kind, because He is immutable—"with whom there is no change nor shadow of alteration";[3] but we cannot perhaps say the same of His creatures, though blessed in heaven.

We answer that a communicated immutability is actually possessed by the saints, for their happiness, being a participation of divine happiness itself, is likewise free from all sadness and grief of any sort.

Again, can the blessed be saddened by the knowledge they will certainly possess of the reprobation of some of their relatives and former friends?

Our answer is a decided negative, justified by the following reasons:

324. As grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, so a special affection will be cherished by the saints toward their earthly parents, relatives, and friends, for whose salvation they will unceasingly intercede before the throne of God. Yet, if they sin, if they throw away their opportunities of grace, if they rob themselves of their right to the heavenly inheritance and die impenitent, they become God's enemies, the objects of His infinite hatred. Hear what the Royal Psalmist and the Book of Wisdom say of sinners: "Thou, O Lord, hatest all the workers of iniquity."[4] "To God the wicked man and his wickedness are hateful alike."[5] Now, as the will of the blessed is perfectly conformed to that of God, in whom they see nothing but what is wise, holy, and just, whilst they cannot hate what He loves, neither can they love what He hates. Seeing in the damnation of the reprobates, whoever they be, the result of their own obstinate will, resisting the call and advances of divine grace and mercy even to the bitter end, they cannot but approve the action of God's justice in the punishment inflicted upon them,

[2] Ps. xxxvi. 13. [3] James i. 17. [4] Ps. v. 7. [5] Wis. xiv. 9.

and they will feel no sadness whatever on that account; and fully approving the sentence of the Just Judge, they will exclaim with the Prophet David: "Thou art just, O Lord; and Thy judgment is right."[6]

A few additional remarks taken from that charming little volume, "The Happiness of Heaven," by the late Father F. Boudreaux, S. J., will confirm the truth of our statements.

325. To the question, "Will the knowledge that some of our own are lost mar our happiness in heaven?" the author gives a peremptory negative answer for various reasons, which are here briefly summed up: Our happiness even in this world does not depend on the happiness of those who are bound to us by the ties of kindred or friendship, especially when their unhappiness and sufferings are caused by their own misdeeds. With greater reason, the same is the case in heaven. Those of our own, who die in sin, are disowned by Almighty God, and forever banished from His kingdom. And, as their wickedness is the work of their own hands, it cannot disturb or mar the happiness of the blessed, who will fully approve the just sentence of a most just Judge. In heaven the blessed are entirely free from the prejudices and passions which now so much interfere with the correctness and impartiality of our judgments. Hence, clothed as they are with the justice and sanctity of God Himself, seeing the fairness of His judgments, they fully ratify the sentence pronounced on impenitent sinners, which they know to be perfectly just and proportionate to their deserts. In heaven they espouse God's own cause, and regulate all their thoughts and sentiments according to His holy will. Therefore, it will be impossible for them to cherish any esteem and love for those whom the Lord has justly rejected from His embrace, because they stubbornly and obstinately persisted in their sins, and died at enmity with their Creator.

To the preceding reflections we may add the following: What happens sometimes here on earth? Suppose that an unworthy son, or an unworthy daughter should become guilty of some infamous, scandalous crime. Would not the father of such children be entirely justified in cutting them off from all parental inheritance and expelling them from the home which they have dishonored by their misdeeds? And would not the whole family —mother, brothers, and sisters—fully approve the action of the indignant parent? It is plain that, from that moment, the absence of the criminal relatives would not produce the least regret, and that the family would not care to meet them so long as they persevere in their wicked ways. God Almighty, moved by His justice, cuts off the impenitent, obstinate sinners from the heavenly inheritance, excludes them forever from His presence, and

[6] Ps. cxviii. 137.

all the blessed, fully realizing the horror of sin and approving the sentence of the Supreme Judge, can feel no regret for the damnation of their kin and the punishment which their rebellion and impenitence justly deserved.

326. Another source of happiness is derived from the fact that the blessed can no longer commit sin, as they are confirmed in grace. First of all, should they ever sin, they would at once forfeit their beatitude, which is entirely incompatible with the presence of sin. Now, Holy Scripture assures us that heavenly happiness cannot be lost, therefore nothing, either on the part of the creature or on the part of God, can ever put an end to it. Hear the assuring words of the Prince of the Apostles: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, hath regenerated us into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you."[7] The heavenly inheritance is said to be incorruptible because it can never perish, or cease to be; it is undefiled because its possessors shall ever be free from all stain of guilt; it cannot fade because it shall never lose its vigor, vitality, and beauty, ever remaining in its integrity, like a flower in full bloom.

Secondly, if the blessed could ever fall away from God's love by the commission of sin, the inspired divine words registered in the Apocalypse would no longer be true: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more. Nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away."[8]

Theologians, under the leadership of St. Thomas, hold that the beatific vision is the radical cause of the soul's utter inability to sin. First, because the beatific vision moves the will to love God above all things, and most perfectly; a love absolutely incompatible with any sinful act, whether mortal or venial. The sight of God presents to the human will its highest, most attractive good, so that no reason, no motive shall ever induce it to cease to love Him. The same truth may be shown by this other reflection.

The greater the good the more forcibly is the human will drawn to love it, particularly if its excellence be clearly known. And if the good be infinite, containing in itself the fulness of all possible goods, it will, so to speak, attract the will infinitely, so that the tendency to it will be practically irresistible. It is plain that in the presence of such attraction toward God it will be absolutely impossible for the human will to prefer any other object to Him; hence the impossibility for the blessed ever to fall away from God's love by the commission of sin.

[7] 1 Peter i. 3, 4. [8] Apoc. xxi. 4.

What we have stated above is a dogma of Catholic faith, teaching us that neither the good angels nor the human inhabitants of the heavenly mansions can commit sin.

The several truths we have stated in this chapter and in the one preceding have been asserted and defined by Pontifical authority. (See constitution of Pope Benedict XII on the Beatific Vision, issued January 29, A. D. 1336. For the full document consult D. Enchiridion, p. 216, n. 530.)

CHAPTER V

THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN, THOUGH PERFECTLY FREE, WILL NEVER COMMIT SIN

327. The statement that the blessed in heaven, though retaining their freedom unimpaired, will never commit sin, is further confirmed by the following considerations:

1. In the first place, owing to their happy condition, they are able to make such use of their liberty as is implied in the following excellent definition of that precious gift:

"To be free is to do what one wills, whilst doing what is right."

The possibility of doing evil is a veritable imperfection, a weakness, a want of power in the human will here on earth. This may be illustrated by examples taken from man's condition in the present life. For instance, no sensible man would boast of having the power of becoming ill, or of possessing an intellect capable of reasoning erroneously, of drawing false conclusions from correct principles. So we must say that the ability to choose evil, of wandering away from our last end, far from being a true power, a perfection of the human will, is, on the contrary, a real defect, an imperfection inhering in it here below. When we are asked, "How does it happen that the angels and saints in heaven, retaining the full use of their liberty, are nevertheless incapable of making an ill use of it by committing sin?" we have at hand more than one satisfactory reply.

As every abuse of liberty is the result of imperfection, it is plain that when divine grace improves nature so far as to remove from it all imperfections, no wrong use of liberty, and, therefore, no sin, will be possible. This is exactly the happy state of the blessed in heavenly glory.

2. A second reason is derived from the fact that the saints possess, among other prerogatives, a gift that is not shared by men upon earth, however holy and learned they may be, and that is perfect knowledge. Man dwelling upon earth is comparatively ignorant and often sees truth only partially and imperfectly. We humans, as St. Paul says: "See now through

a glass in a dark manner."[1] We live by faith,[2] and safeguard ourselves against error and deception in spiritual things by listening and trusting to the voice of God, through His duly accredited witness, the Church.

328. But the blessed move in a quite different environment, and find themselves in far better surroundings. Admitted, as they are, to the beatific vision, to the clear, unclouded contemplation of God's infinite wisdom, they live in the full blaze of celestial light. Now, since the will is to a very great extent controlled and influenced by the intellect, it follows that the will of a citizen of heaven, brilliantly enlightened by beholding God face to face, will act very differently from that of the poor inhabitants of earth.

If it were given us to know as clearly as the saints do, we should never be even so much as tempted to do wrong. Evil seen thus in its true light would lose its very power to attract us or to allure us from the strict path of duty; nor could it ever place itself in competition with virtue.

3. Even in our exile here on earth, God in His wisdom and bounty has so essentially made us for what is good that even in spite of our imperfect knowledge we cannot wish and seek evil *as evil,* but only under the aspect of good. This is the doctrine of Catholic theologians, whose leader, St. Thomas, says: "*Voluntas nihil potest appetere nisi sub ratione boni.*"

On this account, before it is possible for our will to seek evil, evil must be disguised, transformed and dressed up so as to assume, at least, *the appearance* of good. But it is plain that in heaven no such deception is possible; there evil can never wear the livery of good, nor can vice ever hide itself under the mask of virtue. Consequently, it can never be desired or sought after. Sin, therefore, becomes an impossibility for the blissful inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom.

329. One of the gifts which angels and saints possess in paradise is wisdom in the highest degree, and they possess it in proportion to their merits.

The soul of a child that takes its flight to heaven immediately after baptism is at once adorned with greater knowledge, both natural and supernatural, than could ever be possessed by any man upon earth, King Solomon not excluded. The angels and the elect are so wise, so perfectly enlightened, that we cannot entertain the idea that they would ever consent to an essentially foolish act. Such a thing is inconceivable, unthinkable. What act of folly, of madness, and of asinine imbecility can for one moment compare with the act of sin, particularly deadly sin? Considered in itself, to commit sin is by far the most senseless and irrational act of which any creature can possibly be guilty. Hence we understand why the blessed, shar-

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [2] Rom. i. 17.

ing as they do in some manner the wisdom of God Himself, can never be guilty of acts which would make wisdom blush crimson, and could be suggested only by a brainless folly. When we are in heaven we will see things as God sees them, and can therefore estimate them according to their real worth; then we need have no fear of being deceived or misled, but will be able to exercise our full, unhampered liberty, knowing with absolute certainty that it will never lead us astray, nor induce us to choose evil instead of good, or vice instead of virtue.

We see, then, that free will among mortals, who possess no adequate knowledge, must always carry with it at least the possibility of sin; that is, the possibility of an evil choice. For this reason Holy Scripture calls him blessed, "that could have transgressed and hath not transgressed; and could do evil things and hath not done them."[3] It is, then, plain that free will in the blessed, whose intelligence is endowed with perfect knowledge illumined by the light of glory *(lumine gloriae)* can never make an unreasonable, foolish choice; in other words, they can never commit sin; for as theologians express it, they are confirmed in grace.

330. These considerations suggest at once the reason for the dishonorable appellative applied by Holy Writ to sinners. They are designated as fools. Thus, "A wise man feareth and declineth from evil; the fool leapeth over and is confident."[4] "He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a fool."[5] But what is more striking still is the fact that this is precisely what the wicked call themselves. Comparing, in the next world, their wretched state with the happiness of the saints in glory, they exclaim: "We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honor. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Such things as these the sinners said in hell."[6]

And passing from the Old to the New Testament, let us hear what is said of the rich man, intent only on eating, drinking and making good cheer. "But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"[7]

It is indeed an awful thing to be called a fool by Almighty God! And yet this is the appellative that every sinner rightly deserves.

The following quotation from the celebrated theologian, Leonard Lessius, S. J., is here given as a fitting conclusion to our remarks on the question we have discussed:

"Angels and saints in heaven cannot sin because the beatific vision presents to their mental faculties—memory, intellect, and will—Almighty God as their supreme good, so that there can be

[3] Ecclus. xxxi. 10. [4] Prov. xiv. 16. [5] Prov. xxiv. 8.
[6] Wis. v. 4, 5, 14. [7] Luke xii. 19, 20.

no reason whatever why they should cease from ardently loving Him. They clearly see that He is worthy of their utmost love, as He contains in Himself, in the highest possible degree, the fulness of every good, which He shares with them according to their merits and capacity. Hence, as they would not be deprived even for a moment of such infinite good, it becomes absolutely impossible for them to commit sin, the greatest evil, the only thing that can rob them of their perfect happiness, the enjoyment of the sight and possession of God."[8]

See in *Ecclesiastical Record*, March, 1913, p. 264, the article on "Sin and Free Will," by Rt. Rev. John S. Vaughan, D. D., from which we borrowed most of the valuable thoughts and reflections contained in this chapter.

CHAPTER VI

CAN HEAVENLY BEATITUDE EVER BE LOST?

This chapter is intimately connected with the last part of the preceding one; but this question deserves a special treatment, for we may imagine the following supposition: Though the blessed, being confirmed in grace, can never commit sin, yet their beatitude, without any fault on their part, might come to an end. But, thank God, such a supposition shall never be verified, for God Himself furnishes to us in Holy Writ most explicit assurances to the contrary.

331. A few Scriptural citations will suffice: "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they shall praise Thee forever and ever."[1] "The just shall live forever more, and their reward is with the Lord."[2] "Though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality."[3] "The just shall go into everlasting life."[4] "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[5]

It is worthy of remark that the Apostle in the text cited uses the epithet "light" for the sufferings of the present life, and attributes weight to the glory which is to reward them; and he ascribes only a moment to the duration of the former, and an entire eternity to that of the latter. Who does not admire God's unbounded generosity in decreeing so rich a remuneration for services so brief and trivial![6]

332. This same truth is proved as follows: If the good in

[8] Opuscula. [1] Ps. lxxxiii. 5. [2] Wis. v. 16. [3] Wis. iii. 4.
[4] Matt. xxv. 46. [5] 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. [6] See Luke xvii. 10.

which beatitude consists may be lost, either the blessed know it, or, ignoring it, they believe that it will never be lost. In the first supposition, knowing that they will some time be deprived of their happiness, they will from this very moment cease to be happy, and be afflicted with a most intense grief, proportionate to the greatness of the good to be forfeited.

In the other supposition, that they ignore the fact of their future loss, they cannot be happy for two reasons:

First, because true, perfect happiness must exclude every evil, and should consequently exclude their erroneous belief, the error of their intellect. Secondly, because their so-called happiness could not be perfect, as it would lack its chief and essential constituent, that is, the sure knowledge and conviction that it is to be eternal, just as the principal suffering of the reprobates is caused by the knowledge confirmed in both judgments, the particular and the general, that their torments shall never end.

From the preceding remarks it follows that to constitute perfect happiness the following elements most concur: namely, union with and love of God, with knowledge and firm conviction of their interminable duration, thus producing a perfect security and exemption from all anxiety and fear of ever losing what they possess. Therefore, the eternity of heaven's bliss is not only its crowning glory, but also an essential constituent of that indescribable joy which now fills the souls of the blessed.

One of the necessary attributes of God is immutability, that is, total absence and impossibility of change; a perfection shared in some degree by the saints, who, as St. Peter writes,[7] are made partakers of the divine nature itself, consequently of the divine immutability.[8]

CHAPTER VII

WHEN DOES THE HAPPINESS OF THE SOUL OF THE BLESSED BEGIN?

333. The Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XII (A. D. 1334) put an end to all controversy on this much debated question by the following definition, an article of Catholic faith. In his pronouncement the following several points are distinctly stated and clearly defined:[1]

1. According to the common divine ordinance, the souls of the just that are entirely cleansed from all sins after Christ's Ascension are at once received into heaven and associated to the company of the angels.

[7] 2 Peter i. 4.

[8] See St. Thomas, 1a 2ae, qu. v, art. 4.

[1] D. Enchiridion, p. 216.

2. All such souls see immediately the Divine Essence manifesting itself to them clearly and openly.

3. By such vision and fruition those souls are made truly happy, enjoying eternal life and rest.

4. Such vision excludes at once the exercise of the virtues of faith and hope, and perfects that of charity.

5. This vision shall continue without interruption till final judgment, and hence for all eternity.

Similar decrees were issued by the Council of Florence (A. D. 1439).[2]

Several Scriptural passages are here quoted in confirmation of the above defined truth. St. Paul, writing to the Philippians, speaks of himself as "having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,"[3] by which words he evidently intimates that the just, immediately after their body's dissolution, are admitted to enjoy the company of Christ. Now, to be with Christ is to partake of His heavenly glory, which essentially consists in the beatific vision.

The same cheering truth is pointed out by Christ Himself in the following words, literally applicable to the just: "I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am, you also may be."[4]

The tradition of the Church, the all but unanimous consent of the Fathers, the general belief of the faithful, and the universal practice of the invocation of the saints confirm the same dogmatic truths.

As to the invocation of saints, it is plain that, if they were not actually enjoying the beatific vision, enabling them to know the events of this world, they could have no knowledge of our prayers and of our needs, and it would be useless to invoke them.

St. Justin Martyr (A. D. 210) in his work on "Orthodox Faith" (n. 75), states the Catholic doctrine as follows: "After death the just are immediately separated from the wicked, and to each is assigned the lot he has deserved. The souls of the just are admitted to paradise, where they will enjoy the sight and company of the angels, and the vision of Christ the Saviour."

334. Three reasons may be here adduced to prove the fact of the immediate possession of the heavenly glory by holy souls on their departure from this world

1. When the soul is freed from the body and found wholly pure, it is not less capable of the beatific vision than it will be when reunited to its risen glorious body after the general resurrection. As the intellect alone is capable of seeing God face to face, the soul is in this respect entirely independent of the body, and consequently it can partake of the beatific vision, whether separated or united with it When once admitted to

[2] Ibid. p. 235. [3] Philipp. i. 23. [4] John xiv. 3.

God's sight, the blessed souls easily and cheerfully bear the postponement of the restoration of their body to the judgment day, since the possession of God makes them already perfectly happy, so far as the essential happiness is concerned.

2. The good angels received heavenly happiness immediately after the termination of their time of merit and probation. With men death is the end of both their trial and merit. If therefore they have no expiation to endure, their souls will at once be admitted to the heavenly reward.

3. As stated in the dogmatic decree of Benedict XII (A. D. 1336), according to the common ordinance of God, the souls of those that die in actual mortal sin immediately after death descend into hell, there to be tormented by the infernal pains, as intimated by Christ in His Gospel: "The rich man also died and he was buried in hell."[5] So the souls of the just are likewise rewarded immediately after death, particularly if we take into account the fact that the Lord is more inclined to reward than to punish.[6]

As to the Scriptural texts which insinuate that the crown or recompense of the just is reserved for the Judgment Day, they all refer to the full reward to be bestowed on the just both on account of the good they accomplished even after death through the works they did during life, and of the additional glory accruing to them from their risen bodies, as vouched by St. Paul's words: "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil."[7]

The same truth is referred to by the blessed Saviour when, as we read in St. Luke's Gospel, He said: "Recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just."[8]

By bearing these remarks in mind we can easily explain the following texts, sometimes alleged against our thesis: "As to the rest," says St. Paul, "there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day";[9] that is, on the day of his approaching dissolution or death: and on the last judgment day by the glory of the risen body and by the additional accidental reward due to him for the reasons alleged above.[10]

335. To the arguments alleged above we add the following reflections, which go far to show how eminently just, fitting, and reasonable is the divine ordinance according to which the souls of the elect, if found worthy, are at once admitted to the possession of heavenly happiness.

This will clearly appear if we recall the gloomy, disheartening consequences following from the Lutheran doctrine, which teaches that the souls of the just, whose lot is decided immedi-

[5] Luke xvi. 22. [6] D. Enchiridion, p. 216. [7] 2 Cor. v. 10. [8] Luke xiv. 14.
[9] 2 Tim. iv. 8. [10] See St. Thomas, Supplem., p. iiil, q. 93, art. 1.

ately after death, will remain in an unconscious, dormant state till the last Judgment Day, when they will enter heaven. What! Is that to be the condition of those whom we are exhorted to invoke as citizens of paradise and the protectors of us as yet pilgrims upon earth? What! The saints, the pure souls who have suffered so much and labored so long for God, the heroic martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for His sake, are they to remain sleeping for perhaps ten or twenty thousand years? And Almighty God, whom they loved so tenderly, who is more inclined to reward than to punish, will He allow untold centuries to pass before bestowing on His faithful servants their well merited recompense? What becomes of Christ's encouraging announcement registered on His Gospel: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"?[11] And what becomes of that most consoling dogma of Christian faith, the invocation of saints and their intercession in our behalf? According to our opponents' view, that cherished belief becomes a meaningless practice and a senseless superstition. Those souls, we are told, are not annihilated; they still live, but they are wholly inactive; they sleep; they are utterly incapable of thinking and loving. They will therefore resume their intellectual, spiritual functions only when their bodies shall rise from the dust after thousands and thousands of years. This was the error of some early heretics, such as Tertullian and Vigilantius; an error revived and reproduced by Luther and Calvin, the two heresiarchs of the sixteenth century.[12] We are not surprised, then, at learning that so absurd a doctrine has been condemned by the Popes and Councils of Holy Church. For a like reason the Twenty-third Proposition of Rosmini came under the ban of Leo XIII, December 14, 1887.[13]

CHAPTER VIII

CONDITION OF THE BLESSED SOUL AFTER THE BODY'S RESURRECTION

336. Here is presented to our mind a question on which there are two opinions prevailing among Catholic theologians. Some hold that the blessed souls, after the resurrection, will not see God more clearly and more perfectly than they did before it. They allege on their side the authority of Pope Benedict XII who, in his decree on the beatific vision defines that this vision will be continued after the last judgment, not that it will be increased. Other theologians, who invoke the authority of St. Thomas, claim that, owing to the influence of the glorified body,

[11] Matt. iv. 17. [12] See Bellarmine, De Ecclesia Triumphante, c. ii.
[13] D. Enchiridion, p. 511.

there will be some increase in the beatitude of the soul arising from a more perfect enjoyment of the beatific vision. Those, however, who quote St. Thomas as favoring their side, should not overlook the following citation from that Holy Doctor: "After the resurrection the happiness of the blessed souls will increase extensively *(extensive)* but not intensively *(intensive)*."[1] As to the testimony of Benedict XII, it cannot be said to favor either side, for he simply asserts the fact of the continuance of the beatific vision after the resurrection without entering into the question of its possible increase after the last judgment.[2] But both schools maintain that after the resurrection human creatures will enjoy a heaven of greater happiness, not intensively, but extensively, inasmuch as besides the essential happiness, consisting of the beatific vision proper of the soul, they will moreover possess the additional delights and glory of the glorified bodies. In this connection, the saintly theological writer, Leonard Lessius, S. J., calls attention to this gratifying fact; that man's beatitude will surpass that of the highest angels, and might well excite their envy, were such a thing possible in that region of perfect bliss. He reasons thus: "Man will possess something more than the angelic spirits, and enjoy therefore a greater bliss. For he will be equal to them in the gifts of impassibility, agility, penetration, and movements; in the vision, love and blissful fruition of God, and in the perfect knowledge of both spiritual and material beings; besides all this, he will have the glory of the body and enjoy the manifold delights of the sensitive faculties, which the angels do not possess. Hence he will have a greater bliss, at least, extensively, for his soul's beatitude will redound on the body and that of the body on the soul."[3]

Let us now consider the loveliness and beauty of the place where the just are to dwell forever, which must certainly be as superior to the richest and most sumptuous abodes of this world as heavenly things are above all earthly grandeur. The blessed, knowing that the magnificent dwelling-place which the Lord has prepared for them is to be their everlasting home, are overwhelmed with indescribable joy. Heaven is moreover a society; the most delightful and most perfect of all societies. What an exceeding pleasure to live, with the sweetest intimacy in the company of the most beautiful, most pure, most noble souls, which unite in themselves, the splendor of genius, goodness with all its attractions holiness with all its charms!

337. Admirable indeed will be the beauty of each one; the just, as the Divine Saviour assures us, "shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[4] What exceeding pleasure will

[1] 1a 2ae q. 4, art. 5, ad 5um.
[2] See Palmieri, De Novissimis, p. 180. D. Enchiridion, p. 216.
[3] De Div. Nom. vol. iii. c. 2, 3. [4] Matt. xiii. 43.

all experience in beholding that immense gathering of the elect; veritable heroes, who triumphed over the world, the devil, and the flesh! The least among them surpasses in dignity the proudest earthly monarch that ever lived. An additional most charming delight will be enjoyed by the mutual familiarity and friendship among them. They will know one another perfectly, and their love for each other will be inferior only to that with which they will love God, the Author and Giver of all goods.

And what shall be their perpetual occupations? To contemplate God's infinite beauty, and that of His countless creatures; to love, to praise, to thank Him for His benefits of the past, as well as for those of the future.

An inexplicable source of gladness will be produced in them from the consideration, ever before their mind, of their deliverance through God's mercy from the all but infinite evil of eternal damnation, and of their present and ever-enduring gift of their salvation.

Another source of inconceivable joy will be the mutual contemplation of the extraordinary gifts and endowments of the glorified bodies, free from all imperfection, beautiful beyond comparison with any earthly being, immortal in their duration, and fairer than our first progenitors in the days of their primeval innocence.

338. But let us still linger on the study and contemplation of the magnificent destiny held out to us by Christian faith; a destiny replete and overflowing with consolation, because it completely satisfies the highest aspirations of our heart. Following the line of thought of Msgr. John S. Vaughan,[5] we find that we cannot be perfectly happy here below, because God has made us for something immeasurably more sublime, than anything the world can offer. Man's heart, mind, and affections are so vast, so boundless, that nothing less than the Creator's infinite greatness can satisfy them. Should, then, man, made for the solid goods of eternity, be satisfied with the baubles of time? Should he, who is made for heaven, be contented with earth? Being made for the Creator, shall he be satisfied with mere creatures? Will the soul, fashioned and fitted to enjoy the infinite, care only for the finite? As God has made our hearts too big for any creature to fill, He meant to fill them Himself. St. Augustine, grasping the full significance of man's future destiny, exclaimed: "Our hearts, O Lord, are made for Thee, and they are restless until they repose in Thee." These sentiments are thus expressed by the Royal Psalmist: "I shall be satisfied, O Lord, when Thy glory shall appear."[6]

The happiness of every creature consists precisely in the attainment of the end for which it is made, as its greatest misery is incurred by the forfeiture of that end.

[5] Happiness and Beauty. [6] Ps. xvi. 15.

As all the wants, appetites, and cravings of earthly, living creatures distinct from man can be completely satisfied in this world, we rightly conclude that the happiness, whatever it be, for which they were created is found here. Now, it is plain that this cannot be said of the tendencies, aspirations, and cravings of man; hence, we must logically infer that he has to look elsewhere for the full realization of his hopes.

Even the poorest amongst us, a veritable outcast and beggar, who does not know to-day where he will find food and shelter to-morrow, may be one of God's darlings, with a soul adorned with supernatural grace. Here he may be insulted, despised, and badly treated; but neither the wicked men of earth nor the devils of hell can deprive him of the right to the happiness of heaven. And as sure as he lives, if he does not himself cancel his right to heaven by sin, he will, like another St. Benedict Labre, be received into the mansions of the blessed to enjoy a happiness of which we can form here no adequate conception. Similar sentiments are eloquently expressed by St. John Chrysostom in his comments on Psalm v. 6.

Of this ineffable bliss thus speaks St. Paul: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."[7] If the joys of heaven could be described in human language, they would naturally differ very little from those of earth, and, on that account, they would scarcely be worth fighting for.

The delights of paradise are so intense that they fill our souls to their utmost capacity. As Holy Scripture assures us, heaven means the complete freedom from all pain, sorrow, disease, and death: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[8]

Moreover, heavenly happiness means the full enjoyment of every conceivable gratification worthy of and suitable to that abode of perfect holiness. Besides the immensely superior delights of the faculties of the soul, every sense of the body, after the resurrection, will be thrilled with the most exquisite pleasures. All this for the best of reasons, since their cause is to be traced not to mere creatures, but to Him who is the inexhaustible source of all goodness, pleasure and joy.

Moreover, we must reflect that the Lord does not speak of the joy of heaven as a joy that is to enter into us, but rather as a joy into which we ourselves must enter. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."[9]

339. As the author of "The Happiness of Heaven" wisely remarks, to meditate often and seriously on our final blissful destiny, besides deepening our knowledge of God and of the things He has prepared for those that love Him, exercises a won-

[7] 1 Cor. ii. 9. [8] Apoc. xxi. 4. [9] Matt. xxv. 21.

derful power in detaching our hearts from the transitory honors and pleasures of this world. Such reflections, moreover, arouse in our souls an unquenchable thirst for the vision and possession of God, while they infuse into us a new courage to battle manfully against all the obstacles besetting our path in the pursuit of virtue. Such meditations fill us also with a laudable and noble ambition of reaching the highest union with God, which it is possible for us to merit through the assistance of divine grace. This was the ambition of the saints, and should be ours also. It was this desire for a most intimate union with God that caused them to deny themselves even the most innocent pleasures of this world, and cheerfully to undergo sufferings the bare recital of which makes our poor nature shudder. They were thoroughly convinced that, as St. Paul writes, "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."[10]

In Chapter XXXVII of her life St. Theresa speaks thus: "I would not lose, through any fault of mine, the least degree of further enjoyment. I even go so far as to declare that if the choice were offered to me whether I would rather remain subject to all the afflictions of this world, even to the end of it, and then ascend by that means to the possession of little more glory in heaven; or else without any suffering at all enjoy a little less glory, I would most willingly accept the troubles and afflictions, so long as they would secure to me a greater degree of heavenly happiness."

Here is the ambition of a great saint. It is not after crowns, after the honors, and glories of this world that she sighs and aspires, but after a single degree of higher enjoyment in heaven; and to obtain it, she is willing to remain in sufferings and pains even to the end of time.

THE SOUL'S SOLILOQUY AT DEATH

Vital spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, oh, quit this mortal frame!
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying!
Oh, the pain, the bliss of dying!
Come, fond Nature, cease thy strife
And let me languish into life!

Hark, they whisper—angels say:
"Sister spirit, come away."
What is this absorbs me quite;
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

[10] Rom. viii. 18.

The world recedes, it disappears;
Heaven opens to my eyes—my ears
With sound seraphic ring
Lend, lend your wings; I mount, I fly!
O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?

—POPE.

Dear reader, through the boundless mercy, goodness, and love of God, you are destined to heaven's indescribable happiness. This is to be your reward for accomplishing a short and easy task, doing God's holy will; and it will be yours forever if you carry it out conscientiously and perseveringly. That our Divine Lord will condescend to crown our little efforts in His service is made plain by the words addressed to each of the blessed as he reaches the threshold of eternity: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."[11]

At the conclusion of this chapter, to use the words of Msgr. Vaughan,[12] "we cannot do better than raise our hearts and thoughts to Him who rules our destinies and pray, with Cardinal Newman, that He may support us all day long, till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done! Then in His mercy may He give us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last."

CHAPTER IX

THE BEATITUDE OF THE BODY
THE GENERAL RESURRECTION FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

340. In the previous chapters we spoke at considerable length of the beatitude of the soul promised by the Lord to His faithful servants. In this and subsequent chapters we shall treat of the beatitude of the body reserved to the just when rising gloriously on the last judgment day. Hence we are here exclusively concerned with what Christ calls the resurrection unto life, proper to those who have died in the Lord, united with Him by the possession of sanctifying grace at the moment of their departure from this world.

341. Three marvelous things occur in the final resurrection which prove it to be truly miraculous and absolutely supernatural; a privilege, to which the just, however holy, can lay no claim:

[11] Matt. xxv. 21. [12] Loc. cit.

1. The body's reconstruction from the dust—an effect said to be against nature, that is, contrary to the ordinary course of nature's forces and laws which can destroy things, but cannot restore them to their primitive state.

2. The reunion of the soul with the risen, perfectly reconstructed body—a fact conformable to nature inasmuch as the soul naturally desires to be united with such a body.

3. The lasting, perpetual union of the two constituents of man's personality—a marvel entirely above nature, as the corruptible and separable becomes incorruptible and inseparable.

It is plain that only the intervention of God's omnipotent power can accomplish the astounding miracle of the resurrection.[1]

Is it to be deemed impossible that God's almighty power, who called a non-existing world into being, should reunite the lifeless dust with the soul? Is it contrary to nature that the soul should be once more united to the same body that it was originally destined to inform? Is it irrational to conceive of man entering upon eternity clothed in that same complete humanity of which he was possessed here on earth, and which, according to St. Paul, was the decisive factor in his eternal destiny? "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil."[2]

Though, as we shall soon see, all shall rise again, yet it is only of the resurrection of the just that the gloriously risen Christ was the model, the pattern, and the exemplar. The mighty work of redemption will then be perfect and complete, for Christ shall have remedied and repaired all the evils of sin. The evils of the soul, which are far the greatest and the most fatal, are now remedied at once, instantaneously, through the sacramental channels, conveying to the soul the merits of Christ's passion and death, and thereby restoring to it sanctifying grace, the supernatural, divine gift, which alone can entitle us to the possession of eternal bliss. He remedies the evils of the body by delivering it from all the penalties and consequences of both original and personal sins, and restoring it to life immortal. Referring to this astounding miracle of divine power, St. Paul thus writes in his Epistle to the Romans: "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body."[3]

The same Apostle, full of gratitude for this forthcoming event, exclaims: "Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."[4]

It was the thought of rising in glory, with a body free from suffering, that gave comfort to the holy man Job, when the storm

[1] See St. Bonaventure in IV Sent. Dist. 43, art. 1, q. 5.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 10. [3] Rom. viii. 23. [4] 1 Cor. xv. 57.

of adversity had burst upon him. Listen to his beautiful, cheering, prophetic words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in that last day I shall rise out of the earth; and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold and not another. This my hope is laid up in my bosom." [5]

Both the Latin and the Greek Fathers that have commented on this text, as well as all Catholic interpreters and theologians, expound Job's prophetic utterance as exclusively applicable to the final resurrection. In a subsequent part of this work we shall refute the erroneous interpretations of this text put forward by some would-be Biblical scholars and rabbis of the rationalistic Tübingen School.

One of such critics was the English historian, J. A. Froude, who thought he could pose as a learned Biblical scholar, but he only stultified himself by the following comment on the abovementioned text of Job: "If there is any doctrine of the resurrection here, it is a resurrection precisely not of the body, but of the spirit [that is, of the soul]."

According, then, to this learned Oxford professor, when a man dies, not only the body ceases to live, but the soul also, for every resurrection supposes a previous death. (See his lecture on Job.)

342. But the classical text, which not only foretells but also vividly describes that astonishing event, is that of the prophet Ezechiel: "Behold a commotion, and the bones came together, each one to its joint. . . . And behold the sinews and the flesh came up upon them; and the skin was stretched out over them . . . and the spirit came into them, and they lived; and they stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." [6] Some writers, unwilling to admit this striking prediction as a proof of the general resurrection, maintain that this passage of Ezechiel is simply an image, or representation, in figurative language, of what was to happen at the liberation of the Jewish people from the Babylonian captivity and the restoration of the Jewish kingdom. This was to be an event so extraordinary as to be compared to a general resurrection. In fact, they add, immediately after that description, "the Lord said to the prophet: 'Son of man, all these bones are the house of Israel.' " (Ibid. 11.)

We cannot accept such an interpretation, particularly because in the hands of hostile Jews and rationalists it is utilized to weaken, nay, to eliminate altogether, the to them very embarrassing truth of the general resurrection.

343. There exists, however, a far more solid and natural interpretation of this disputed passage; namely, that which takes these prophetic words in their obvious, literal sense as descriptive of the most astounding prodigy which is to close the ex-

[5] Job xix. 25, 26, 27. [6] Ezech. xxxvii. 7–10.

istence of mankind on earth—the resurrection of all the individuals of the human race. As the Jews doubted whether the Lord could deliver them from captivity and restore their kingdom, the Heaven-inspired prophet appeals to a revealed truth well known to the Jewish people; viz., the resurrection of the dead, and argues thus: "If the Lord is able even to restore life to the bones that are dead, with greater reason can He deliver you when alive, and bring you back to your country." It is what logicians call the argument *a majori ad minus*—an inference from what is greater to what is less. As if the Lord said: "If I can do what requires a far greater power, raise the dead to life, I can certainly easily accomplish what demands a lesser power, deliver you from captivity." What our opponents add, quoting the last words of the prophecy: "Son of man, all these bones are the house of Israel," evidently militates in favor of our own interpretation, for they imply and state that the comparison was intended for the Jewish people, to revive their hopes in the deliverance from captivity through the intervention and power of the Lord. As St. Jerome wisely remarks on this reasoning of the inspired prophet: "There would be neither force nor sequence, if the fact of the resurrection were not true, and held as such by the Jewish people."

We cannot here omit what St. Jerome calls "*robustum testimonium*,"—"the strong testimony," in behalf of the dogma of the final resurrection. It is registered in the Twelfth Chapter of the Book of Daniel: "And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always." The term "many" *(multi)*, as St. Augustine and St. Jerome explain, is a Scriptural expression meaning "all," as may be seen in the following parallel instances: "For as by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just."[7] "He [the Messias] hath borne the sins of many."[8]

344. The traditional belief of the Jewish nation in the future resurrection is most emphatically testified by the seven Machabees brothers on occasion of their cruel martyrdom at the hand of the impious king Antiochus. Said the second to the tyrant: "Thou indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, in the resurrection of eternal life." Moreover, the fourth martyred brother bore testimony also to the truth of the twofold resurrection attested by our Blessed Saviour in His Gospel, for He spoke thus: "It is better, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by Him; for as to thee, thou shalt have no resurrection unto life."[9]

[7] Rom. v. 19. [8] Is. liii. 12. [9] 2 Mach. vii. 9, 14.

CHAPTER X

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION ANNOUNCED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A striking passage in the New Testament bears ample witness to the belief of the Jews in the resurrection, with the solitary exception of the sect of Sadducees refuted by our Blessed Saviour.[1] I refer to the dialogue between Jesus and Martha, the sister of Lazarus: "Jesus saith to her: thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." [2]

This same belief is testified at length by St. Paul, thoroughly acquainted with the Jewish beliefs and traditions, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians.[3] Among the arguments he alleges, the following is most convincing: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again." The apostle's reasoning comes to this: we can no more doubt of the resurrection of the dead on the Last Judgment Day than we can doubt of the resurrection of Christ Himself, a fact so firmly established that no amount of sophistry shall ever be able to disprove it.

345. Among the chief consolations held out to us by Christian faith the dogma of our body's resurrection, no doubt, holds the foremost place. Through it, as St. Paul assures us, "the enemy, death, shall be destroyed," [4] and Christ's power "will reform the body of our lowness made like the body of His glory" [5] The Apostle then rightly concludes saying: "Be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope. The dead who are in Christ shall rise first. Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words." [6]

In the miseries, afflictions, and calamities of the present life, we should not be like those who have no hope, but we should rather rejoice because, as the same holy Apostle tells us in God's name, "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." [7]

Such is the most cheering solace, which our holy mother, the Church, recalls to our memory, particularly in the liturgy of Eastertide, bidding us at the same time to give "thanks to God, who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." [8]

346. In our demonstration we purposely kept as the last the strongest proof that can ever be adduced, and that is the testimony of Jesus Christ Himself, recorded in St. John's Gospel.

"The hour cometh when all that are in the grave shall hear

[1] Matt. xxii. 23, 29, 30, 31, 32. [2] John xi. 23, 24. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 12–58.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 26. [5] Philipp. iii. 21. [6] 1 Thess. iv. 12, 15, 17.
[7] 2 Cor. iv. 17. [8] 1 Cor. xv. 57.

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the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."[9] Our Blessed Lord combined in these short sentences both the motive of hope and that of fear, whence we learn this most weighty, practical lesson—that the resurrection unto life, with all its glory and delights, is to be the recompense of those who die in the Lord, that is, in the love and friendship of their Creator, free from all grievous sin; whilst the resurrection unto judgment is to be the lot of impenitent sinners who breathe their last in enmity with their Maker. Of this latter resurrection spoke the martyred Machabee brother when he addressed the cruel tyrant Antiochus, as we have seen above. (n. **344.**)

Our Divine Saviour here proposes to our consideration two powerful aids to our weak nature—the motive of hope or love and that of fear or hatred of sin. When persons are tempted to do wrong, the fear of punishment is no doubt a very powerful influence deterring them from evil-doing. "The fear of the Lord," says Holy Scripture, "is the beginning of wisdom,"[10] the true wisdom, which teaches men to prefer the eternal to the temporal, the Creator to the creature, virtue to sin, heaven to earth.

Though this is perfectly true, yet it must be acknowledged that the motives of hope and love are also very potent to induce us to the hatred of sin and the practice of Christian virtue. We should strive, as far as possible, to represent to ourselves Almighty God under His most attractive and benignant aspect, and He is infinitely more attractive as the rewarder of the good than as the punisher of the wicked.

CHAPTER XI

IN WHAT WILL THE BEATITUDE OF THE BODY CHIEFLY CONSIST?

By the operation of Divine Omnipotence the risen body becomes endowed with those—in some sense—spiritual attributes which are in harmony with its glorified state and possessed of power which can not be limited by matter, space, or time.

347. Theologians are unanimously agreed that the beatitude of the body will particularly consist in the four qualities or perfections with which the risen glorified body is to be adorned, so that it may become a fitting, worthy companion of the celestial spirits with which it is destined to dwell throughout the eternal years. The marvelous endowments of the glorified

[9] John v. 28, 29. [10] Ecclus. i. 16.

bodies are impassibility, brightness, agility, and subtility. As we shall notice in the course of this chapter, all these marvelous qualities, or extraordinary gifts, are pointed out and described by St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians.[1]

By impassibility is meant a complete exemption from pain, sickness, or suffering of any kind. This, however, does not mean that the risen body will be unfeeling, like a marble statue; but it only means that it will no longer be subject to any disease or pain whatever, though retaining the power of receiving such sensible pleasures and gratifications as are befitting the celestial abode and the new condition of its bodily organism; for, says Jesus Christ: "They shall be as the angels of God in heaven."[2] "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption."[3]

The second quality is brightness or splendor, indicated by St. Paul's words: "It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory."[4] That is, it shall be embellished with extraordinary beauty, accompanied by a shining light, totally free from all defects and blemishes, a veritable masterpiece of God's omnipotence, wisdom, and love. The same wonderful transformation is assured to the just in other passages of Holy Writ. "The just shall shine and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds."[5] "We look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory."[6]

But the most convincing testimony regarding the gift of brightness, with which the risen bodies of the blessed shall shine forever, is that of Christ Himself, who thus speaks in His Gospel: "Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[7]

The third quality of the glorious bodies is agility, pointed out by the Apostle in the following sentence: "It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power."[8] The holy prophet Isaias foretold this wonderful change, saying: "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall take wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint."[9] St. Jerome explains this passage as descriptive of the marvelous state of the glorified bodies in the world to come; for, if applied to the present world, that prophecy will have only a metaphorical meaning. As St. Augustine and St. Anselm tell us, this perfection will endow the elect with the power proper of the angelic spirits, for it enables them to transport themselves from one extremity of the universe to the other with the rapidity of thought. Moreover, it imparts to them an extraordinary

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 42–47; St. Thomas Supplem. p 3, qq. 82, 83, 84, 85.
[2] Matt. xxii. 30. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 42. [4] Ibid. 43. [5] Wis. iii. 7.
[6] Philipp. iii. 21 [7] Matt. xiii. 43. [8] 1 Cor. xv. 43. [9] Is. xl. 31.

physical strength, through which they can move and transport, not only their own bodies, but also most heavy material things. In this world, owing to the marvelous forces of nature, we can send our thoughts across continents and oceans in the twinkling of an eye, on the wings of the electric current. After the resurrection we shall possess that power in our own bodies, for they shall rise endowed with spiritual qualities, entirely subject to the control of the soul.

The fourth quality, most mysterious in its character, is that of subtility. As we learn from St. Paul, the bodies of the blessed, though retaining their material condition, will be clothed with properties which naturally belong only to spirits. Hence, owing to this endowment, they will possess the power of penetrating even the hardest substances as easily as the sun's rays penetrate diamonds and other precious stones. Our Divine Lord exhibited this wonderful power when He rose from the dead and came forth from the tomb without removing the huge stone, which had been rolled against His sepulcher. Another instance is Christ's apparition to the apostles, related by the Evangelist St. John. When the apostles were gathered together, "Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said: Peace be to you."[10] As the risen just are to be made comformable to the glorious body of Christ, so they must also be adorned with this supernatural gift, possessed by Him in the highest degree of perfection. "It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body."[11]

348. With what rapturous delights will the soul be reunited with its glorified body, which becomes its temple forever! For here it is a question of a permanent resurrection, quite different from the examples of temporary resurrections performed by the holy prophet Eliseus in the Old Testament[12] and by Christ Himself and His apostles in the New.[13] But all these miraculously risen people were once more subjected to the sentence of death, and the same must be said of all other individual resurrections, even to the end of time. Of our Divine Redeemer, on the contrary, it is written: "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him."[14] The same must be said of His members, the risen just, of whom He is the head.

As we shall soon show, immortality will truly be their crowning glory. It was forfeited by Adam in punishment of sin; it is through Christ's merits restored with all its glories to the just as a reward for their victory over sin. This much we learn from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: "But now Christ is risen from the dead the first fruits of them that sleep."[15]

[10] John xx. 26. [11] 1 Cor. xv. 44. [12] 4 Kings viii. 5–xiii 21. [13] Matt. xxvii. 52; Luke vii. 15; Mark v. 42; John xi. 44; Acts ix. 40; Ibid. xx. 9, 12. [14] Rom. vi. 9. [15] 1 Cor. xv. 20.

Moreover, to the just will be restored the gift of integrity, or freedom from concupiscence, forfeited by Adam's sin. In virtue of the possession of this gift all inordinate tendencies of the sensitive faculties will cease to war against the soul. Hence the blessed will possess a tranquil dominion over all the natural inclinations of their body, which will be entirely submissive to reason, as reason itself will be completely subject to the will of God. On this account the state of the blessed will be not only equal, but immensely superior to that enjoyed by our first parents in the Garden of Eden, in the days of their primitive innocence.

CHAPTER XII

THE FUNCTIONS AND PLEASURES OF THE GLORIFIED SENSES

349. There is no doubt that in heaven the bodily senses also will exercise their respective functions and experience corresponding delights. In fact, it would be useless for the blessed to resume their bodies if they should be deprived of the use and delights springing from the senses. Moreover, our soul is not only rational, but also sensitive and therefore capable of both rational and sensitive gratifications. It must, therefore, enjoy a twofold bliss—the essential, which is derived from the vision and fruition of God; and the accidental, resulting from the perception of most excellent sensitive objects. There is a reason of eminent fitness for such a reward. The just, the saints and the martyrs in particular, endured many afflictions, pains, and tortures in their bodily senses for the sake of Christ, as described and predicted by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in want, distressed, and afflicted. Others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection."[1] These words of St. Paul contain both a record of the past and a prediction of the future.

As to the past, we learn from the Old Testament, and particularly from the Second Book of Machabees, Chapter VII, how many saintly, courageous souls, even before the coming of Christ, suffered divers kinds of torments in homage of God's holy laws.

As to the future, that this prediction was literally fulfilled is shown by the history of the Catholic Church, containing the precious record of what the faithful servants of God endured

[1] Heb. xi. 35, 37.

for Christ and in the defense of the Christian Faith. It is therefore just that they should also receive the recompense due for what they suffered in their bodily senses.

Another reason is furnished by the following consideration: Theologians, basing their arguments on Holy Scripture, teach that in hell, after the resurrection, every sense of the human body shall have its own peculiar punishment, and that the sense of feeling or touch will be especially tormented, because it is particularly by the sins of the flesh that the reprobates have offended God and damned their souls. "That they might know that by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented."[2] "Her sins have reached unto heaven and the Lord hath remembered her iniquities. As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her."[3]

350. Now surely we must not imagine that God is more severe in punishing the wicked than He is good and liberal in rewarding the just. And it is precisely in the sense of taste and feeling that the saints have suffered most for God's sake. Many were starved to death; others were made to drink boiling water; some were cruelly scourged, torn to pieces and devoured by wild beasts; others were burned alive, and still others endured the most excruciating tortures that human cruelty could devise and diabolical ingenuity suggest. The life of heaven therefore shall be one of pleasures also through the glorified senses. These bodily gratifications, as well as the delights of the beatific vision, are evidently beyond our comprehension. Still, we may form some idea of them by reflecting on the exquisite delights which reach our soul through our senses even in the present state of imperfection. They are at times so enticing, so fascinating, that worldlings run recklessly after them, and seem unable to resist their allurements and intoxicating attractions. What, then, must these be in heaven, where everything is perfect? The risen bodies of the just will thrill and throb with pleasures of which we can form no conception—a fitting recompense for all the sufferings endured here below for Christ's sake. Indeed, "The sufferings of this time," says St. Paul, "are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."[4]

For a detailed explanation of the delights allotted in heaven to each of the glorified senses see "Happiness of Heaven" and "Au De là du Tombeau," by T. Hamon, S.J.

[2] Wis. xi. 17. [3] Apoc. xviii. 5, 7. [4] Rom. viii. 18.

CHAPTER XIII

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ENDOWMENTS OR QUALITIES OF THE RISEN BODIES OF THE JUST

351. Following, in the main, the line of thought elegantly expressed by the distinguished writer, Bishop Vaughan, in his "Earth to Heaven" and "Happiness and Beauty," we submit to our readers these other reflections on the bodily happiness of the elect in heaven.

Besides the proofs of Holy Scripture alleged in the course of this discussion, there exist three special grounds, reasons, or motives for our belief in the wonderful transformation that is to take place in the human body at its resurrection and reconstruction by the omnipotent power of God.

352. The first arises from the manner of its formation. In the present order of Providence, in conformity with the laws of nativity established by God's wisdom, the body of every human being is indeed the work of God. Such a truth, besides being prompted by the voice of reason, bears the testimony of divine revelation.

Hear the remarkable, heaven inspired language of the martyred mother of the seven martyred sons: She bravely exhorted every one of them in her own language, being filled with wisdom and joining a man's heart to a woman's thought, she said to them: "I know not how you were formed in my womb, for I neither gave you breath, nor soul, nor life; neither did I frame the limbs of every one of you. But the Creator of the world, that formed the nativity of man, and that found out the origin of all, He will restore to you again in His mercy both breath and life, as now you despise yourselves for the sake of His laws."[1] Though this is perfectly true, yet we know that in the formation of each human body Almighty God does not act directly, but indirectly through secondary causes, and in conformity with the natural laws that govern the nativity of man. In other words, He makes use of human agents, the parents. We need not be surprised, then, if the child may, at times, show the imperfections, flaws, and shortcomings of these secondary agents. But with the risen body, the manner of its formation is entirely different, for it is rebuilt from the dust of the earth by the direct power of the omnipotent God, whose works are absolutely perfect and free from the least blemish or defect. Hence such bodies will be masterpieces of beauty and loveliness, faultless in every respect, so as to be ornaments in the court of heaven, in perfect harmony with the grandeur and mag-

[1] 2 Mach. vii. 21, 22, 23.

nificence of the mansions of the blessed, God's own dwelling-place and the eternal abode of the elect.

353. The second ground or reason is deduced from the end or purpose for which the risen bodies are destined. In the present world the human body must labor and toil; it is subject to the inclemencies of the season, to the excess of heat and cold and other untoward surroundings. Shall it be so with the glorious bodies of the risen just? No, by no means. For they are destined to live not on earth, but in heaven; they are restored to life not for suffering, but for enjoyment; not to labor, but to rest. "And I heard a voice from heaven," says the sacred writer, "saying to me: Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them."[2]

354. The third ground is as follows: Our present body, even in the case of a most robust constitution, can last only a few years. It is subject to injurious accidents which may at any time put an end to its ephemeral life. Moreover, the average duration of human life, as proved by statistics, scarcely extends to thirty years. Very few reach the century mark. In old age it outruns its strength, grows feebler from day to day, and finally dies. Then it must be soon removed out of sight and consigned to the grave, where it disintegrates, crumbles, and becomes the food of worms. "Our years shall be considered as a spider: [that is, as frail as a spider's web], the days of our years in them are threescore and ten years. But if in the strong they be fourscore years: and what is more of them is labor and sorrow."[3] "The number of the days of men at the most are a hundred years: as a drop of water of the sea are they esteemed: and as a pebble of the sand, so are a few years compared to eternity."[4]

At the last resurrection, the body is refashioned and rebuilt on an altogether different plan; for it is made to last not for a hundred or a thousand years, but for all eternity; in other words, it is to be reclothed with the immortality which had been forfeited on account of original sin. Hence it will be entirely free from liability to any injury that might mar its beauty and entrancing loveliness. No sickness or disease of any kind can ever befall it. The new state or condition of the risen bodies of the just is thus gloriously described by St. John in the Apocalypse: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[5]

355. It is interesting to recall here some of the absurd theories which the so-called scientific men invented in order to explain

[2] Apoc. xiv. 13. [3] Ps. lxxxix. 9, 10. [4] Ecclus. xviii. 8.
[5] Apoc. xxi. 4.

the future, final destiny of human souls independently of divine revelation. The reader will kindly pardon this digression. We learn from astronomy that the amount of heat radiated from the sun through planetary space is so enormous as to baffle all calculation. The sun is a gigantic furnace of such magnitude that comparisons between it and what we know of heat are futile. Among the problems with which astronomers have grappled during the last two centuries, is that of accounting for the fact that, notwithstanding the immense daily loss of heat by radiation, there does not seem to be in the sun any perceptible diminution of it. How, then, is this continuous loss compensated?

Two principal theories have been devised. According to the first, an equivalent supply of heat is produced by the continual falling into the sun of millions of aerolites or meteoric stones, somewhat like those that fall on the earth as shooting-stars, particularly in August and November. The largest authentic aerolite is that which fell at Bendigo, Brazil, in 1816, which weighed five and a half tons. This theory has been recently abandoned, and replaced by the following theory of compression, invented by Helmholtz:

The gases and metallic vapors are powerfully compressed by the sun's gravity. This compression causes it to contract, and the contraction, which amounts to about ten inches daily, produces the intense radiation that warms the whole solar system. If we take into our reckoning the sun's diameter (866,000 miles), and its volume or bulk (1,300,000 times that of the earth), we find that it may require millions of years to affect perceptibly that vast globe and reduce its life-giving influence to a point where humanity will freeze to death.

The French scientist Figuier, a representative of the rationalistic school, was not satisfied with either of the preceding theories, and made bold enough to advance a third one, which, he thinks, is quite satisfactory, for it fully accounts for an ample supply of heat daily furnished to the sun. This is done, he says, by the thousands of human souls that continually depart from this world on their separation from the body by death. They rush into the sun, and by the heat they impart to it, they repair the loss which it undergoes by radiation.

To say nothing of the palpable absurdity of purely spiritual substances supplying material fuel for the sun's heat, according to this novel scheme the poor souls will find all the happiness they may have in the burning furnace of the sun. If such a fate were the exclusive lot of wicked souls, we might not quarrel with Figuier, for then it would be simply a question of transferring hell's fire from the lower to the upper regions. But as he makes no distinction between good and wicked souls, we find it supremely absurd that the untold millions of just, holy, God-loving and God-fearing souls should have no better pros-

pect before them than that of supplying heat to the burning furnace of the sun when they depart from this world.[6]

356. We have seen what is the ultimate destiny of man's soul according to one of the leading rationalistic scientists of our times. Let us now examine the view of the German materialistic philosopher Büchner, concerning the destiny or chief purpose of man's body at death. After discarding the Christian doctrine on the resurrection and denouncing as simply absurd all that the Catholic Church teaches on the future existence of man's material organism, he condemns the veneration of the tombs, the practice of enclosing mortal remains in marble and lead coffins as being highly detrimental to the economic interests of the State. All such customs, however ancient and universal, imply an attack on the common right of agriculture, on the free circulation of fertilizing matter. The best thing, the most useful thing, that man can leave of himself, when dying, is a great quantity of phosphate, of fruitful ammoniacal salts, destined to increase the fertility of the soil, augmenting thereby the material well being of the survivors in the land.[7]

Let the reader here recall the sublime prophecy of Job [8] and the assurance of its fulfilment given by Christ Himself [9] and he will easily understand what the degrading teaching of rationalistic philosophy amounts to.

English-speaking scholars are, no doubt, aware of the negative position on future life advocated by Herbert Spencer. Yet Spencer lays no claim to positive certainty on behalf of his conclusions. He admits that upon the deeper questions relating to the solution of that vexatious problem he has reasoned himself into a blind alley. There was no warrant for his halting, dazed and helpless, in this "no-thoroughfare" of his own making rather than follow the pathway which had been trodden by millions of confiding Christians—many of them more learned than himself. As their own testimonies assure us, they experienced no difficulty in finding their way out of doubt and gloom into certainty and light.[10] A writer in the London *Times* thus spoke recently of Herbert Spencer, whose philosophy has of late lost its influence: "We do not attack it; we ignore it. It has gone out of fashion. It does not answer; it does not even ask the questions we ask. Contrary to his theories, we believe that the passion for truth, beauty, and righteousness is not merely a useful illusion, but a reality more real than all our external surroundings."

[6] Figuier. "True Philosophy of the Universe."
[7] Büchner, Kraft und Stoff (Mind and Matter).
[8] Job xix. 25–27.
[9] John v. 28, 29.
[10] See the Light of Faith, by F. McGloin.

CHAPTER XIV

HARMONY OF THIS DOGMA WITH THE PROMPTINGS OF REASON

357. We are told by some people that the one great, lofty motive which ought to inspire the Christian soul in the battle with sin, is the pure love of God, and that it is an ignoble and selfish thing to refrain from evil and to do good for the sake of reward and the fear of punishment. Virtue needs no sanction, for it is its own reward. A man should be noble enough to keep himself clean without a threat, and brave enough to do right without the prospect of a recompense. This is manliness and morality at its highest. It is therefore unnecessary to give one's thoughts to future life.

In the first place, we answer that this kind of reasoning is like a sword sharpened on both sides, hence it cuts both ways. For if it is wrong and mean to think of the rewards and penalties beyond the grave, it must also be wrong and degrading to take account of them in the present life. The man who lives in this world heedless of all consequences of his doings, whether good or evil, is called a madman or a fool. It is not reason but arbitrary caprice that forbids hope from winging her flight to the hereafter. Moreover, to say that we should not be stirred and aroused by the prospect of one day arriving at the possession and enjoyment of God's infinite majesty is to make light of God Himself, and disparage His dearest promises. Hear how the holy prophet David speaks: "O Lord, I have inclined my heart to do Thy justifications forever, for the reward";[1] or "for Thy eternal reward," as St. Jerome translates. Besides, does not God Himself exhort us to make use of this motive? How does the world's Redeemer conclude His famous sermon on the mount? After assigning a recompense to the practice of each beatitude, He adds: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."[2]

"Be thou faithful until death, saith the Lord, and I will give thee the crown of life."[3] To those who reject the fear of punishment as a sordid, unworthy motive, we simply reply that Christ judged otherwise. Here is what He says in His Gospel: "I will show you whom you shall fear; fear ye Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him."[4] The fear of God is perfectly compatible with the love of God. As a matter of fact, those saints whose dominant characteristic trait was the fervor of their love toward God, were ever most keenly alive to a salutary fear of His judgments.

358. As to the question of the general resurrection at the Last

[1] Ps. cxviii. 112. [2] Matt. v. 12. [3] Apoc. ii. 10. [4] Luke xii. 5.

Judgment, the doctrine made known by divine revelation is found to be in full harmony with the dictates of human reason, as it is shown by the following reflections: Our body and our soul are two substances wholly distinct from each other; still, they are so intimately united that from their union there springs one single personality, one only compound being, called man. Hence the acts of these two substances, though in themselves distinct, yet are inseparable and attributed to one single agent or person. Therefore, all human actions, whether good or bad, come from the soul as the principal agent, and from the body as their secondary cause. Now if the body and the soul are inseparable in producing actions which may be worthy either of reward or punishment, it is but reasonable and just that both should be either rewarded or punished, according to their deeds. If the soul has believed, hoped, and loved in obedience to its Creator, the body also has done its share in God's service by enduring fast and abstinence and bearing the galling yoke of Christian mortification. If the soul has been harassed by sorrow and grief for sin, the body has done penance and shed tears of contrition. If the soul has commanded, the body has obeyed. As they have been united in waging war against sin and vice, so shall they jointly partake of the recompense they have deserved. All this evidently points out to the eminent fitness and reasonableness of the body's resurrection as taught by Christian faith. This is exactly what St. Paul meant when he said: "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil."[5]

If there were no resurrection, the body would remain eternally deprived of its share of future recompense or of punishment, according to its deserts. It is evident that no such retribution is received by the body during the present life.

359. The following remarks of St. Thomas fully bear out our conclusion. Actions, he writes, are proper not of the soul alone, but of the composite being (*humanum compositum*) resulting from the union of the soul with the material organism, the body; and since retribution is given to the operating agent, it is necessary that the whole man, composed of body and soul, should receive the recompense of his deeds.[6]

In another part of his works the same holy Doctor reasons substantially thus: In the present life men, owing to the union of soul and body, may do what is right and good, or what is wrong and evil. They must therefore receive both for the soul and for the body a just reward or punishment. Now it is evident that in this life they cannot attain the full and just measure of their deserts. It is therefore necessary to admit the reunion of the soul to its body, so that man may receive what is due to him

[5] 2 Cor. v. 10. [6] 1a 2ae, q. 74, art. 2, 3.

according to his merits or demerits.[7] Moreover, there is in our soul a yearning for union with a body, which, as divine revelation teaches, will be, at the resurrection, so transformed and beautified as to increase the happiness of the soul itself, at least extensively, as has been noted above. Such a desire, justified by divine, supernatural promises, cannot be frustrated; it will then be fully realized.

360. A few additional reflections on the following words of St. Paul will illustrate the same truth: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."[8] If we cannot hope to obtain any good or happiness after death, if the goods of this life contain all that we may attain, then we are of all men the most miserable. For, while sinners enjoy to their hearts' content all the pleasures and gratifications the world offers, we, on the contrary, in obedience to the Christian law, must restrain all criminal desires, shun all sinful pleasures, and bear with resignation the sufferings and miseries of life. But the Apostle adds: "If the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again. . . . But now Christ is risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that sleep."[9] These words are to be understood as applying to the perfect resurrection to a glorious immortality proper of the just, of whose resurrection Christ was the type and model. Our mortal bodies, which now feed on the most sacred body of Christ, shall indeed be reduced to dust, in accordance with the Lord's sentence pronounced on Adam and his descendants: "Dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return."[10] But at the Last Judgment, they shall rise to life immortal, for Christ, in the Sacrament of the Altar, unites Himself to the faithful through His vivifying flesh, in order that by this intimate union with His immortal body they may become one day partakers of His own immortality. This is what our Divine Saviour meant when He said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise Him up in the last day."[11]

361. Such, according to the Fathers, is one of the effects of worthy communion. To quote one or two out of many, St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks thus: "God's incarnate Word united Himself to mortal nature, that our humanity should be, so to speak, deified by contact with His divinity. On this account, through His sacred flesh, He unites Himself to all believers, becoming mingled with their bodies, that by this union with His body, which is immortal, they also may become partakers of incorruption."[12] The martyr, Blessed John Fisher, commenting on a similar passage of St. Irenæus, one of the earliest Fathers, writes: "What wonder if our bodies, nourished by the vivifying body and blood of Christ, though reduced to dust,

[7] Contr. Gent. l. 4, c. 79–83. [8] 1 Cor. xv. 19. [9] 1 Cor. xv. 16, 20.
[10] Gen. iii. 19. [11] John vi. 55. [12] Orat. Catech., n. 39.

should, through the power of this Divine food, rise to the glory of immortal life?'' [13]

In the following chapter we will treat of three interesting questions arising from the fact that, in the present order of Providence, the soul must remain separated from the body till the final resurrection on Judgment Day.

CHAPTER XV

IS THE NATURAL TENDENCY FOR REUNION COMPATIBLE WITH THE MIRACULOUS CHARACTER OF THE RESURRECTION?

362. It is evident that this and the two subsequent questions, being strictly theological, are almost exclusively intended for the clergy, who are familiar with discussions of this kind; though I flatter myself that cultured laymen may derive from them both instruction and spiritual profit.

The proposed question comes to this: How are the two orders, the natural and the supernatural, to be reconciled?

What gave rise to this discussion is the difficulty stated by a late Italian prelate in his notes on the sermons of Father Monsabré in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, during the Lent of 1889.

''The soul,'' he writes, ''does not constitute the whole man. To form a human person, its union with the body is evidently required. The body, at death, is separated from the soul and falls into dissolution, disintegration, and decay. The soul is of itself absolutely unable to resume the body reduced to dust; and the body is still more incapable of reuniting itself with the soul. Hence the new union of the body with the soul is supernatural or miraculous, that is, depending exclusively on God's power and will.[1]

''What follows from this? Evidently the difficulty of reconciling the natural with the supernatural order. In fact, the soul cannot remain forever without its body, *which constitutes a part of its nature*, for it is something repugnant to reason that an immortal being, such as the soul is, should remain forever imperfect, as would be the case if it were no longer reunited with the body.[2] But, on the other hand, for the soul to resume its body through the latter's resurrection is something altogether supernatural and miraculous. It would, then, seem that nature's claim would demand a supernatural intervention, which is plainly erroneous, as destructive of the very idea and notion of the supernatural, which implies something above all the exigen-

[13] Lib. i., Contra Haeres, c. 2, n. 3. [1] St. Thomas Supplem., 3ae, q. 75.
[2] St. Thomas Contra Gent. b. 4, c. 79.

cies and claims of nature. Hence the dilemma springing from the proposed apparently insoluble difficulty:

"Either we admit that the resurrection of the body is natural, which is an utterly false assertion, or that the soul should remain forever destitute of the body, a perpetually incomplete being, which is likewise untenable, being contrary to God's revelation."

How then may we maintain the distinction between the natural and the supernatural order? The humble prelate adds: "I am waiting for light from those that are more learned than myself."

SOLUTION OF THE DIFFICULTY

363. The desired light has come, and it shines so brightly that only the wilfully blind can fail to see it. It is furnished by the distinguished bishop of Nicastro, Italy, Msgr. Valensise, who in two recent pamphlets, grapples successfully with the above difficulty, as it is seen from the following extracts:

In the first place, says Msgr. Valensise, we must absolutely deny the statement on which rests the principal support of the whole difficulty; namely, that the body constitutes a part of the nature of the soul, for if that were true the soul evidently would be no longer intrinsically independent of the body, and would thereby cease to be spiritual and immortal. We need not be surprised, then, that from a wrong premise and a false principle there should follow what is said to be a false and a wrong conclusion.

As sound philosophy teaches, the human body does not constitute a part of the nature of the soul, but of the nature of man, that is, of the substantial compound resulting from the union of a bodily organism with a rational soul. Therefore, it is only man, the substantial compound of both soul and body, that requires for its life and action those two essential constituents, body and soul intimately united. Neither does the actual union of the body with the soul constitute an essential part of the soul itself, for, if it were so, the soul could not exist except when united to the body, and when the human compound is dissolved by death, the soul also would cease to live.

364. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind the true nature of the soul, which receives its being by creation and can exist independently of the human compound. It has indeed its complete being in that compound, but is not essentially tied to it.

The union of the soul with the body, on account of the corruptibility of the latter, is naturally temporary, and its separation is of itself, that is, independently of a contrary divine provision, permanent, for there exist no natural forces capable of effecting that reunion by causing the practically identical

body to be again united to the same identical soul. Hence to bring about such reunion is required the intervention of a supernatural cause, God Himself, the universal agent, to whom all nature is subject.

If even the simple reunion of the soul to its own corruptible body would be miraculous, with greater reason must we admit as entirely miraculous and supernatural the soul's reunion to a glorified body, a body adorned with qualities and gifts resembling those of the soul, such as immortality and incorruptibility. As divine revelation assures us, this will be the wonderful transformation to be accomplished by God's omnipotence at the general resurrection.[3]

It cannot then be said that there exists in the soul a natural tendency and desire to a reunion with a corruptible body, which would again be only temporary and precarious and therefore undesirable.

But in the case of a future reunion to a glorified, immortal body promised to the just, it is plain that such a reunion must form the object of the soul's intense desire. This is what St. Paul means by the following words: "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of the body."[4] By denying, then, the necessity of reunion as if it were claimed by nature, the whole foundation of the supposed insoluble difficulty is done away with and the essential distinction between the natural and the supernatural order is maintained.

We are indebted for the above solution to the following authorities: (1) "In Doctrinam S. Thomae Aquinatis de Futura Hominum Resurrectione Commentatio," Auctore Dominico Valensise, Nicastri Episcopo in Italia: an Italian pamphlet by the same author on the same subject. (2) Civilta Cattolica, Serie xvii, vol. ii. p. 456–461. (3) "De Resurrectione Mortuorum," Auctore Andrea A. Campodarsego, O.M.Cap., p. 97.

CHAPTER XVI

DOES THE DEPARTED SOUL NATURALLY DESIRE TO BE REUNITED TO THE BODY?

This question is proposed here in order to treat more fully the subject discussed in the preceding chapter. The answer to it is given in the two following propositions:

FIRST PROPOSITION

365. "Abstracting from its condition, whether holy or otherwise, we hold that the separated soul retains a natural tendency

[3] See 1 Cor. xv. 12–23, 42–44. [4] Rom. viii. 23. See also 2 Cor. v. 2, 3, 4.

to unite with the body." This is nothing else but its fitness to constitute with it the human compound, man; for the soul, in the state of separation, is an incomplete substance, destined to be perfected by its reunion with the body. Such a tendency remains, though the reunion is no longer possible without a miraculous intervention of God's omnipotent power.

It is in this sense that must be understood the statements of the Angelic Doctor in his *Summa Contra Gentiles.*[1]

As to the tendency of the body toward reunion here is what St. Thomas writes: "As man's mortal remains are to be reunited to the soul only by the power of God, it cannot be said that there exists in them any natural inclination to such reunion."[2]

SECOND PROPOSITION

366. "The separated souls of the just, in the present order of providence, involving the supernatural destiny of the whole man, of his body as well as of his soul, have doubtless a rational, elicit appetite or craving for union to the body, which, they know, will be free from sufferings and will rise to life immortal." The souls of the just know that the glorified and impassible body will then attain its full and lasting perfection, in consequence of which they will suffer from its association no impediment whatever in their spiritual operations of intelligence and will. Hence their beatitude will be—at least extensively—greater than that of the angels, who are deprived of the accidental delights arising from the glorified bodies. Father Lessius, as we noticed before, calls attention to this gratifying fact, when contrasting the relative enjoyment of men and angels in heaven: "Man will be, in some manner, happier than the angels themselves, for, whilst he will be endowed as they, with impassibility, quickness of motion, the vision, love, and fruition of God, and with the knowledge of things both natural and supernatural, he will moreover possess the glory of the body and its many gratifications, not enjoyed by the angels. On this account the souls of the just most ardently desire their bodies' resurrection. For this reason the souls of the saints, and particularly of the martyrs, are represented in the Apocalypse as supplicating the Lord to hasten their union with the bodies, in which they suffered during life, and thus complete the beatitude of His elect. "And they cried with a loud voice saying: How long, O Lord (Holy and True), dost thou not judge and revenge our blood in them, that dwell on the earth?"[3] They ask this not out of hatred to their enemies, but out of zeal for the glory of God, to be most strikingly manifested to all men in the general judgment.

And what was the answer to their prayer? "And it was said

[1] L. iv, c. 79, 80, 81. [2] Supplem. 3ae, qu. 78, art. 3. [3] Apoc. vi. 10.

to them that they should rest for a little time, till their fellow servants and their brethren, who are to be slain, even as they, should be filled up."[4]

But, in another order of providence, it is quite possible that, excluding the body's resurrection to immortal life, the soul, guided then only by natural light, would not cherish any elicit desire of union with a corruptible body, subject to the same miseries, infirmities, and impediments, which it experienced when formerly united with it, since such a union, besides being temporary, would be more injurious than beneficial. According to Suarez, the soul, both when separated from the body and when united to it, may be called a *semi-persona.* In fact, when separated it is naturally incomplete, though retaining its condition as a part of the human compound, man, and its aptitude to be reunited with the bodily organism, thus to constitute one complete human substance, *hominis personam.* When united to the body it may also be said to be a *semi-persona* in this sense, that in this state of union it retains the same partial personality, which it possesses in the state of separation.

But the soul separated from the body differs specifically and essentially from the angelic nature for two reasons. First, because, as shown above, it is naturally incomplete and communicable to a material organism for the formation of the human compound; which cannot be said of the angelic spirits. Secondly, because the soul, even when separated from the body, does not undergo any change as to its specific, substantial entity, though it becomes capable of new modes of operating, for, as schoolmen teach, *"Modus operandi sequitur modum essendi,"*—that is, "every being operates according to the manner of its existence."[5]

CHAPTER XVII

DOES THE SEPARATED SOUL FIND ITSELF IN A VIOLENT, RESTRAINING STATE?

367. What gave rise to this question, and necessitates an answer, is the following objection: The soul, when separated from the body, finds itself in a kind of violent state; but this cannot last, because, as the schoolmen tell us, *"Violentum non durat,"*—"What is in a violent state cannot last." Therefore either this union must be effected, and then resurrection becomes necessary, even in the natural order, that is by the reunion of the soul to a corruptible body. Or, if not effected, the soul will sooner or later come to an end, for a being in a violent state cannot last.

This objection is completely solved if we remove the founda-

[4] Ibid. vi. 11.

[5] See Lessius, Opuscula, vol. iii., n. 34.

tion or pedestal on which it rests, that is, if we disprove the assertion that the soul, when separated from the body, finds itself in a violent state.

In the first place, as shown in Part III of our book, it is natural for the soul to live and act without its union with the body, because it is immortal and independent of all material organs in the exercise of its mental faculties. Hence the state of separation implies no violence whatever in that respect.

Moreover, the souls departed from this world are either in the state of salvation already in heaven, or as yet in purgatory; or are in the state of damnation as reprobates in hell.

As to the souls of the just in the interval till the coming of the final resurrection, they suffer no violence from its delay: first, because the possession of heaven, either actual or to come, makes them perfectly happy, and secondly, because their will is perfectly conformed to that of God. All they lack is merely the accidental bodily happiness.

As to the reprobate souls, they certainly suffer no anxiety for reunion, since they know full well that their association with their bodies will be to them a cause of additional torments and miseries. It has therefore been proved that the separated soul does not find itself in a violent state.

We conclude this fourth part of our work by a brief discussion of two strictly connected subjects.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VARIOUS DEGREES OF MERIT

368. Divine grace, by making us adoptive children of God, confers on our actions a value, which, considered in themselves, they do not possess, and renders them meritorious of eternal glory. Merit always involves some kind of claim to a recompense. When a recompense is due through strict justice, whence arises an equitable right on the part of the claimant, we have what is termed condign merit—*meritum de condigno*. When retribution may be claimed simply as something befitting, or as a kind of grateful return, there is then the merit of congruity—*meritum de congruo*.[1] For an act to be meritorious of heavenly glory it is required that it should be morally good, free, and supernatural; that is, elicited through motives inspired by divine faith. On the part of God the promise of a reward is always supposed.

Eternal life is indeed the inheritance of adopted sons, but it is also the reward of the good deeds, which the just performed under the influence of and by the aid of divine grace.

[1] St. Thomas, 1a, 2ae, qu. 114, art. 1, 3, 7.

369. As we proved above, though man cannot be said to possess a strict claim or right to divine recompense, for whatever he has is God's gift; yet, on account of God's explicit promises, he is entitled to a reward for his good deeds. In the present order of providence he is destined for heavenly beatitude, and it shall be bestowed on him as a recompense for his merits, if he fulfils the imposed condition, i. e., compliance with God's holy will. In human things a kind of just proportion or equity must be observed between the merit, or the work done, and its reward. Can we say the same of the supernatural bliss bestowed by Almighty God on His loyal, faithful servants? No, by no means. There is no proportion, no comparison whatever between even the most heroic actions of men, and the heavenly reward, a happiness perfect in its object, boundless in its extent and eternal in its duration. "Well done, good and faithful servant," says Christ in His Gospel, "because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord."[2] This most cheering truth is thus proclaimed by St. Paul: "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."[3]

A similar sentiment is expressed by the same Apostle in his second Epistle to the Corinthians (iv. 18), which we had occasion to quote when speaking of heavenly happiness.

370. In this connection I will here reproduce a thoughtful remark of Father Tapparelli, S.J., the distinguished author of the classical "Essay on Natural Right." In his first dissertation (n. 133), he writes: "Here some one might ask me, 'How can man acquire any merit before God, whom he cannot at all benefit, and from whom he receives all that he possesses?' This is my answer: It is plain that man cannot acquire, in regard to God, any merit of strict justice, as between himself and God there exists no equality whatsoever, but only some respects or relations of proportion, as St. Thomas states.[4] But, if we take into account God's decree creating man for natural happiness, on condition that he should tread on the appointed path, he acquires, by so doing, a kind of right to the attainment of the end proposed to him. For what kind of path would that be which did not lead to the proposed goal? On the other hand, though the good intentions and actions of man can afford no intrinsic advantage to God, yet they contribute to the increase of His extrinsic glory, to promote which man was created; and in this way he lends his share to the moral order of the universe, of which God is the Supreme Ruler; and in this sense man may be said to be in some manner advantageous to God and thereby merit a recompense for his virtuous deeds."

In the present order of providence, owing to man's elevation

[2] Matt. xxv. 21. [3] Rom. viii. 18. [4] 1a 2ae, pu. 114, art. 1, 2, 3.

to the supernatural state, we find that there exists a just proportion between human virtuous actions and the divine reward. For as adopted children of God we merit the beatific vision and the degree of beatitude corresponding to our co-operation with divine grace. It is the dignity of adoption acquired through the merits of Christ that imparts to our acts a supernatural value and makes them proportioned to the supernatural recompense. Hence the bestowal of heavenly beatitude is designated in Holy Scripture as a reward,[5] as the inheritance of worthy sons,[6] as a crown for lawful combats,[7] and as the recompense or hire due to diligent laborers.[8]

We should, however, never forget the wise reflection of St. Augustine, who says that Almighty God by bestowing on the just the eternal reward only crowns His own gifts.

The following not only heretical but also supremely absurd proposition of Baius was deservedly condemned by Pius V in his Bull *Ex Omnibus Afflictionibus* issued October 1, A. D. 1567:

N. 14. "The good works of the just will not receive in the last Judgment Day a reward greater than they deserved to receive according to the just judgment of God."[9]

371. It is certain that what constitutes the essential happiness of heaven; namely, the beatific vision, the "happy-making" sight, is substantially the same for all the blessed; but at the same time, we must remember that the enjoyment of such happiness contains different degrees of intensity proportionate to the merits acquired by each individual during his lifetime upon earth. Hence the holier in heaven will receive more delight through the faculties of the soul and the glorified senses, after the resurrection, than those that have practised virtue in an inferior decree. Therefore each of the blessed shall possess that degree of happiness, which is proportionate to the supernatural perfection attained by the virtue and holiness of his life.

All the just are to rise in glory, but each one according to the degree of his perfection and supernatural merit. St. Paul illustrates this truth by a fitting comparison: "Star differeth from star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead."[10] There will then be a kind of gradation in the personal beauty, grace, and splendor allotted to the saints.

372. Here we may ask: "Shall those different degrees of glory cause envy in those that possess an inferior degree of heavenly happiness?" We answer that this cannot be. There is no envy in heaven, the abode of perfect bliss, tranquillity, and peace. Every one there is completely satisfied with his own degree of glory, which he knows to be proportionate to his merits. Nay, he even rejoices at the higher degree of glory granted to others who merited it by the higher degree of holiness which they attained in their probation on earth.

[5] Gen. xv. 1. [6] Rom. viii. 17. [7] 2 Tim. ii. 5. [8] Matt. xx. 8.
[9] D. Enchiridion, p. 331. [10] 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

CHAPTER XIX

IS THE DEGREE OF HEAVENLY GLORY AFFECTED BY THE ENDURANCE OF A LONG PURGATORY?

373. The preceding discussion on the different degrees of happiness allotted to the blessed reminds me of an interesting question treated by the Rev. Father Ernest Hull, S. J., the able editor of the *Bombay Examiner*, in the issue of that paper for April 17, 1915, p. 156. The question is whether the fact that a man goes through a long purgatory will cause him, when entering heaven, to receive a lower degree of glory than that given to him who goes through a short purgatory or none at all?

In answer to this question we must remark that, as theologians teach us, merit and temporal punishment are separate things. Merit is measured by acts of virtue, while temporal punishment is measured by acts of sin, and each total is reckoned separately. The total of merit determines the degree of reward in heaven; the total of sin measures the degree of punishment to be endured in purgatory, if not atoned for in this life. Hence the individual who suffers a long purgatory, at its termination, will get full credit for all his merits; and if they were greater in number than those of the other individual referred to above, he will receive a greater degree of glory. The reason is that merit and punishment or expiation belong to a different order of things. The merit acquired is eternal, while the demerit caused by sin is temporal in its consequences. We of course suppose that sin has been repented of, and its guilt forgiven and effaced before death.

All this is not revealed doctrine, but is merely the application of reason and common sense to supplement the somewhat scanty data we possess on this subject. If the soul of the just man carries with it from this life such stains as must detain it from an immediate entrance into the presence of the Creator, it is still assumed that the full measure of merited happiness awaits it, once the claims of divine justice have been fully satisfied.

According to God's most benevolent design earth is the exile of humanity, heaven is their country; a thought elegantly developed by St. Augustine, a man as distinguished by the loftiness of his genius as by the holiness of his life: "We seek the Lord God in the present life, where we labor; we shall find Him in the future, where we rest. Here below we see God, as it were, in a shadow, in a dark manner;[1] in heaven we shall behold Him in His full splendor, face to face. On earth our love of God is merely incipient: in paradise our love of Him will be

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

perfect. There our repose will be without end, our knowledge without error, and our joy without tears. Heaven means all this to us as yet pilgrims in exile; it means a good deal more to those that have reached their blessed country."[2]

THE BLESSED NEWS

(By Richard Langhorne, English Martyr, 1679)

374. It is told me I must die.
O blessed news!
I must quit
Earth for heaven.
My earthly prison for a liberty of joy,
My banishment for my true country.

I must pass
From time to eternity,
From misery to felicity,
From change to immutability,
From death to immortality.

I must go to fill
My spirit with a plenitude of light,
My will with a fulness of peace,
My memory with a collection of all goods,
My senses with a satiety of pleasures.

I go where I shall find
All things which I can desire,
Nothing which I can fear.
I shall no more want any good,
God shall be unto me all in all,
And my all for all eternity.

I shall see and I shall live,
I shall praise and I shall bless,
And this I shall forever do.

It is told me I must die,
Oh, what happiness!
I am going
To the place of my rest,
To the land of the living,
To the haven of security,
To the kingdom of peace,
To the palace of my God,
To the nuptials of the Lamb,
To sit at the table of my King,

[2] De Civitate Dei.

To feed on His blessed sight,
To see what no eye hath seen,
To hear what no ear hath heard,
To enjoy what no mortal can conceive.—AMEN.
—From the *Ave Maria,* July 31, 1915, p. 136.

PART V

HOW ALMIGHTY GOD HELPS MAN TO REACH HIS LAST HAPPY END

NOTE

375. It is both an interesting and a cheering truth to recall what the Lord has done and continues to do to enable His rational, human creatures to attain their last end, the happiness of eternal life. This we shall endeavor to show in a series of chapters, all bearing ample evidence to the same most consoling fact.

We can have no better evidence of the actual intervention of God's mighty power in the great business of salvation than that offered by the incident related in St. Mark's Gospel.

Our blessed Saviour had spoken at some length of the difficulties to be encountered, and the obstacles to be overcome in winning the kingdom of heaven, when some of the disciples, astonished at His words, said among themselves: "Who then can be saved?" Jesus, who well knew their secret thoughts and words, looking upon them said: "With men it is impossible; but not with God. For all things are possible with God."[1] We shall treat of this important matter in the following chapters on the divine benefits lavished upon man, all intended as means directed to secure our eternal salvation.

God requires men to co-operate freely with His grace, for He is wise and leads His rational creatures to their appointed end in harmony with the faculty of personal freedom He gave them. He is just, and will grant them eternal happiness as a merited reward. He is good and wishes that His faithful, loyal servants, whether angels or men, should have in heaven the additional joy of having won it by their free co-operation with divine grace, a perpetual gratification reserved only to such of the elect as enter paradise with their souls adorned and enriched with meritorious works.

CHAPTER I

THE BENEFITS OF NATURE

376. The benefits of nature are derived from creation. Before we received the gift of existence, before the creation of the an-

[1] Mark x. 26, 27.

gelic world and of the universe in which we live, nay, from all eternity, God thought of us, loved us and decreed to make from nothing all the beings round about us that they might contribute to our welfare and to our perfection and happiness. "Thus saith the Lord: Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love."[1]

When He created the angels He was destining them to be the heralds of His designs in our regard, the helpers of our salvation, the custodians of our lives and our defenders against our diabolical enemies.

No better evidence of the astounding power of the good angels could be adduced than the startling fact related by the prophet Isaias: "When the angel of the Lord went out and slew in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand."[2] A terrible slaughter of God's enemies also referred to in the First Book of Machabees:[3] "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"[4] They acted indeed as the ministers of our redemption. The archangel Gabriel predicted to the prophet Daniel the precise year and week when the atoning sacrifice of the Messias was to be offered to the Lord's offended majesty in reparation of sin and the redemption of man.[5]

The same archangel was deputed by the Lord to announce to the Virgin Mary that she had been chosen to be the Mother of the Messias, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind.[6]

To each one of us is assigned by God a prince of His heavenly court to be our guardian, guide, and protector during our earthly pilgrimage.

When God created the atoms of matter, He intended so to combine and arrange them as to form the light that was to illumine my eyes, the air that I was to breathe, the earth that was to sustain and nourish me by the production of plants and their fruits, the sun and the stars that were to proclaim to me His glory; the animals intended to serve, clothe, nourish, and recreate me.

Divine Providence fashioned for us a body that was to sum up in itself the different degrees of beings and the wonders of the material and sensitive world. In fact, in the language of St. Gregory the Great: "Man shares existence with stones, growth with plants, and sensibility with animals."[7] And when He framed and ordered the universe He meant to submit it to man's dominion. "The Lord said: Fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth."[8] He charged men with the sublime, honorable duty of proclaiming to their fellow-

[1] Jer. xxxi. 3. [2] Is. xxxvii. 36. [3] 1 Mach. vii. 41. [4] Heb. i. 14.
[5] Dan. ix. 24–27. [6] Luke i. 26–38. [7] Homil. xxix. in Evang.
[8] Gen. i. 28.

creatures the existence, the wisdom, goodness, and power of their Sovereign Creator and Supreme Benefactor, as manifested by the countless creatures that surround us.

377. The generous bounty which God displays in behalf of His rational creatures is thus beautifully described by the author of a little book entitled "The Paradise of God": "It is God that enlightens us in the sun; that cheers us with its genial warmth, and delights us with the varied beauties of field and forest. God's power is in the mighty storm; His immensity is reflected in the boundless ocean; His goodness is shown in the endless stores of the teeming earth. His hand paints the petals of the flowers, shapes their tiny leaves, and fills their cups with honeyed fragrance. His breath ripens the fruits of vines and trees and waving grain. His strength and His sweetness are hidden within them to fortify, nourish, and refresh us, thus rendering our exile less tiresome and reminding us by the enjoyment of earthly gifts of the far greater treasures that await us in our true country, our heavenly Father's home. And what are we in soul and body but living monuments to attest the goodness of God? Our souls are His gift; they live and act, they know and feel through Him. Our eyes see with His light, our tongue speaks with His motion; our hands labor and our feet walk with His power. It is our God and our Father that lays us down to rest at night and closes our eyes in sleep, while He watches at our side and holds His mighty hand over us to protect us from harm. It is our God and our Father that gently arouses us when He gives us another day to enjoy His blessings in this life and gain merits for the higher beatitude of the next, for as St. Paul said: 'In Him we live, and move and are.'"[9]

How cheering are the words of the holy prophet David, recalling the tenderness of God's love toward His faithful servants: "O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee! . . . Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy face, from the disturbance of men."[10] O all ye lovers of God, think of the reward of your love. What evil can hurt you, or what good can be wanting to you, if He loves you, who can do all things. What greater good can you desire than to be loved by Him, who can bestow upon you heavenly happiness; who has the power of life and death; who can condemn those He hates, and save those He loves. As He cannot save those that hate Him, so He cannot condemn those who love Him.

Who would ever fear if he were intimately conscious of this cheering truth, that the arms of the Omnipotent are wound about him all day long and that nothing on earth or in hell can injure or molest him without permission of that Divine Lover,

[9] Acts xvii. 28. [10] Ps. xxx. 20, 21.

whose love is infinite, and whose power no creature can resist. To be fully sensible of all this is to be calm, happy and imperturbable.

CHAPTER II

THE BENEFITS OF GRACE

The series, chain, or multitude of such benefits originated long before the accomplishment of our redemption, for it is from all eternity that God decreed to raise man to the supernatural state and to destine him to the immense happiness of the beatific vision.

Hence, at the first instant of his creation the future parent of the human race was enriched with that highest of gifts, original justice, sanctifying grace, which he was to transmit to all his descendants.

378. Through his disobedience Adam forfeited that grace both for himself and his posterity. But the Lord at once promised a Redeemer who was to save all that would receive the grace of redemption, which He was to merit by His passion and death. "As many as received Him [Christ the Saviour] God gave them power to be made the sons of God." [1] From that moment mankind received the power of being reinstated into the supernatural order, and it may be said that all that happened in the history of man from Adam to Jesus Christ had a special reference to the groundwork of our redemption. God thought of us and prepared our redemption and our salvation when He preserved Mary from contracting the stain of original sin, and offered to her the unrivaled honor of the divine maternity, with all the sacrifices which that dignity entailed.

It is for us, to redeem us, to save us, that the Eternal Son of God became incarnate, was born in a stable, died upon the cross, rose from the dead, and after sending His apostles to preach to all nations the tidings of salvation, He ascended into heaven, whence He sent the Divine Spirit, who was to remain in His Church till the end of time; to teach her all truth and protect her against all her enemies.[2]

All that Jesus Christ taught, did, and suffered was for our spiritual benefit. He instituted the sacraments, the priesthood, the Church in order to communicate to us the gifts of redemption. Through Baptism we are, so to speak, clothed with the grace of Christ; for, as St. Paul teaches, Jesus, by Baptism, imparts to us His image and likeness, and it is only by preserving it unsullied, free from deadly sin, that we shall obtain the promised eternal recompense. For this is the doctrine of St. Paul, that God predestines to eternal glory those whom He foreknew to be made conformable to the image of His Son.[3]

[1] John i. 12. [2] John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xvi. 7, 13; Luke xxi. 15.
[3] Rom. viii. 29.

By the other sacraments He embellishes and adorns this image, He restores it when lost; but it is above all through the Holy Eucharist that He perfects His union with us and our resemblance to His Divine Son, who thus speaks of this marvelous effect of Holy Communion: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him."[4]

By conferring on the apostles the power of transmitting to their survivors and their successors the Sacred Orders, particularly the priesthood and the episcopate; by bestowing on Peter and his successors the gift of infallibility; by multiplying the martyrs, the Doctors of the Church, and her ministers, God wished that the light of faith, the benefits of redemption, and the means of salvation should be scattered broadcast and be placed within the reach of all.

It would be next to impossible to record the countless means of salvation which God's bountiful providence furnishes to His creatures. Besides those that are common and therefore generally known, there must be an endless number of such as are specially adapted to the peculiar needs of certain individuals, and are manifest almost exclusively to their fortunate recipients. But I must here recall to the reader's memory an instrument of spiritual instruction and sanctification which, though frequently used, is seldom appreciated at its true value. I mean the reading of good books. Yes, God be thanked for good books; supplied to us by God's servants in abundance, and in such variety as to meet and satisfy the taste of every reader. St. Hugh of Lincoln was always impressing on his religious brethren the duty of reading. He went so far as to tell them that spiritual books were their arms in time of war, their occupation in time of peace, and their solace in time of sickness; a wise counsel, which, though directed to cloistered souls, may be followed with much profit by persons living in the turmoil of this busy world. I will now glean a few thoughts from that sweet master of spiritual life, the late Father Frederick William Faber of the Oratory. They will assist the reader in acquiring a greater esteem of this means of grace and in utilizing it to his best advantage. "Other things being equal," says Father Faber, "a person beginning the spiritual life with a taste for reading has a much greater chance of advancing and of persevering than one who is destitute of such a taste. It increases the light round about us, and also the light within us. Reading feeds prayer, it supplies matter, it plants the wilderness; it irrigates what it has planted. The old masters called it oil for the lamp of prayer."[5]

Though the scope of my work does not demand that I should here suggest a list of spiritual books, otherwise easily obtainable, yet I cannot deny to myself the pleasure of reminding the

[4] John vi. 57.

[5] Spiritual Conferences, p. 362.

reader of a recent production eminently fitted to help him in attaining the ultimate purpose I had in view in writing my book, which is securing to him the happiness of life eternal. I refer to the excellent volume entitled "Heaven Open to Souls," by Rev. Henry Churchill Semple, S. J. On several occasions I have called the reader's attention to the solemn truth that death in mortal sin alone can rob us of heavenly bliss. Father Semple in the subtitle of his work purposes to prove to his readers that love for God above all things and perfect contrition are easy and common in souls resolved to avoid mortal sin, the only obstacle to the attainment of everlasting glory. It strikes me that the two books practically supplement each other. Mine points out the end, the infinite, eternal happiness of future life: that of Father Semple develops the surest means for attaining it; love of God above all things and Perfect Contrition are incompatible with the only hindrance to endless happiness, mortal sin. Hence the scope and aim of both books are practically identical, for whilst Father Semple opens heaven to souls that they may surely enter it, when departed from this life, in the seventh, eighth and ninth parts of my volume I open to the reader the dungeon of hell that he may surely escape it after death.

Who can describe in fitting language the life of a Christian admitted to share the riches of Christ's plenteous redemption! Every moment spent in His service makes him more precious in God's sight and puts to his account ever-increasing claims to additional degrees of eternal, heavenly glory. Every good thought, desire and action performed in grace acquires a priceless value. With every breath he is brought nearer to that blessed moment when he shall be set free from the conflicts of this mortal life and bidden to enter upon the heritage of divine bliss. But God does not reserve all these gifts for eternity. For even here on earth, in this valley of tears, the land of exile, the Lord manifests the riches of His goodness to His faithful servants; and, in addition to His promise of eternal happiness in His Kingdom, He pledges Himself to bestow a hundredfold upon them now in return for the trifles, the petty things they renounced for His sake. "A hundred times as much now in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting."[6] The whole environment of such souls is divinely ordained and disposed as a preparation for the possession of God throughout eternity. He withholds no gift from them which is directed to the forthcoming realization of His holy purposes. And what He gives, He gives not as a God far off, but as one who is near them, within them, the temples of the Holy Spirit.

[6] Mark x. 30.

CHAPTER III

THE PROMISED BENEFITS OF GLORY

379. We have briefly recalled what the Lord has done for us in the order of nature and that of grace. But all this was only a prelude, a preparation, a foretaste of a still higher gift He intends to bestow on His servants, i. e., everlasting glory and happiness in His heavenly kingdom. He has endowed us with an intellect capable of infinite knowledge; with a will capable of infinite good; a twofold aspiration to be completely gratified by the vision, possession, and enjoyment of our Creator, the source of infinite truth and infinite good.

Then shall be verified the astounding transformation spoken of by the inspired writer, the Apostle St. John, in his first Epistle: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is."[1]

This lofty dignity should inspire us with sentiments worthy of so exalted a privilege and move us to the performance of actions befitting it. In olden times the son of a great king was invited to share the repast of a simple peasant family. "Go," said the king, "but never forget for a moment that thou art a king's son." God speaks the same words to each of us to-day: "Go and fulfil all the duties of thy earthly calling, but never forget that thou art the child of God." The frequent recollection of this thought will prevent us from doing anything unworthy of that unrivaled prerogative. This relationship with the Eternal and the Omnipotent carries with it all the special privileges, rights, and advantages of real sonship, such as a claim to the inheritance of sons, and the possession of God's fatherly love in all its marvelous manifestations both here and hereafter.

Nature, grace, glory—such are the three successive degrees or manners of God's communications to His creatures, and of the munificent effusions of His infinite bounty, liberality, and love. The series of gifts accruing to us through the mystery of the Incarnation, leading us step by step to the realization of our destiny, heavenly beatitude, has been tersely described by St. Thomas Aquinas in the following stanza, adopted by the Church in the Liturgy of the Blessed Sacrament:

Se nascens dedit socium,
Convescens in edulium,
Se moriens in pretium
Se regnans dat in premium,

[1] John iii. 2.

which may be thus paraphrased:

> Christ was born to be our model and companion.
> He dwells in our temples to be our food;
> By dying on the cross He paid the price of our redemption
> And in heaven He gives Himself as our greatest good.

Could Almighty God do more? Could we desire higher blessings? We may here apply what St. Augustine wrote of the gift of the Holy Eucharist, bestowed by Christ on all believers even to the end of time. God is infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely rich; yet it must be said that in all the treasures of His wisdom, of His omnipotence and of His wealth, He could neither devise nor confer upon His rational creatures a greater blessing and a higher gift, after that of Holy Eucharist, than their destiny to eternal glory.

And I, a poor worm of the earth, lost, overwhelmed as it were by the immensity of God's goodness and love for men, shall I dare raise the insolent cry of rebels and say "*Non serviam*—I will not obey my Sovereign Creator and Supreme Benefactor"?

The infinite goodness and munificence of God toward His creatures will appear still more evident, if after the general description of His divine liberality, we descend to some details and point out particular heavenly favors lavished upon us. We may lay it down as a fundamental Catholic truth, that Almighty God is more anxious, more willing that we should reach our last end, everlasting happiness, than we could be ourselves. As one of the evidences of this most striking fact, let us consider the untold benefit of the exhaustless, perpetual treasure of the merits of Christ, the subject of the following chapter.

Let us also briefly consider the divine graces showered on mankind before the accomplishment of man's Redemption. The help which humanity needed God gave, in the first instance, in the form of a primitive revelation, in which was promised the fulness of grace to come. This revelation sets the divine seal on the weightiest truths which reason, a heavenly gift, teaches, it throws light upon the profoundest problems of human existence, and was intended to prepare men's minds for the coming and brighter revelation in the person of Jesus Christ.[2] (For a full development of this doctrine see St. Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, l. iii. c. 37, 63, 73, 147, 153.)

[2] Heb. i. 1, 2.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFINITE MERITS OF CHRIST AND THEIR APPLICATION

380. The Son of God in carrying out the great work of Redemption has so harmonized the interests of our salvation with the claims of divine justice that the forgiveness of sin could be obtained not only once but hundreds, thousands, nay, millions of times, that is, whenever men should fall away from grace, forfeit their privilege of children of God and heirs to His kingdom; so long as they would sincerely repent. This is evidently a display of mercy unheard of among men, and utterly incomprehensible. Has there ever been a prince, king, or monarch so clement and merciful as to be willing to forgive the crime of high treason or enormous outrages perpetrated against him, whenever they might be committed, on the simple condition that the criminal plead for mercy? We should scarcely find a ruler willing to pardon such heinous crimes even once or twice. But the Lord not only forgives sinners countless times, but makes mortal sin, in itself irremissible, pardonable by the application of the infinite merits of Christ's passion and death, an inexhaustible wealth of divine satisfactions, without which redemption would be of no avail to us.

381. Let us also consider the great facility with which this treasure is applied and communicated to our souls to cleanse them from all stains. If long, laborious, severe penances should have to be endured in order to blot out deadly sins closing heaven's portals against us, we should not recoil from the arduous task. But how does the case stand? All that God requires —and He could not demand less consistently with His justice— is sincere repentance and compliance, whenever possible, with the Divine Ordinance, to which God has attached the grace of pardon through the intervention of His minister in the sacrament of Penance. Admirable indeed is the exhibition of divine mercy, on account of which to no one, however guilty, is closed the door of reconciliation, so long as he is willing to accept from God's hand the offer of pardon on the simple, most reasonable condition of true repentance and honest resolution of amendment and reform. No kind, no number, no gravity of sins ever impedes the facility of absolution. Its efficacy is instantaneous. The priest's word is spoken, his sentence is ratified in heaven, and the mighty work is done. A sinner of forty, fifty years or more becomes again the child of God and the heir of His kingdom. But, what is still more wonderful and an evident manifestation of divine mercy, the requisites for absolution are always within the compass of human weakness; that is, attri-

tion, at least imperfect sorrow, sincere confession, the priest's absolution and an honest resolution of amendment. This is all that the Lord demands of Christian believers, and consistently with His wisdom and justice He could not require less. It is true that all our acts of repentance lie at an infinite distance from the degree of reparation due to God even for only one grievous sin and the grace of deliverance from the eternal punishment due to it in the world to come; but by the intervention of the sacraments, and the application of the merits of Jesus Christ, through those channels of grace, our acts of contrition, penance, and satisfaction are rendered fully acceptable to the divine justice and worthy of imploring and obtaining the needed pardon of all sins. The chief benefit, then, of the new law, the law of grace, is found in the institution and use of the sacraments, in which is stored up the divine treasure of the infinite merits of Christ applicable to all who worthily approach them. And this is the reason why the devil, the sworn enemy of the human race, knowing their efficacy for salvation, strives to pervert and corrupt the true conception of them, thus to prevent men from frequenting them.

Unhappily he partially succeeded in his fiendish scheme at the time of the so-called Reformation in the sixteenth century, the fatal results of which have lasted even to this day. Several of the sacraments have been thrown overboard, and the few that were retained have been so desecrated and perverted that in many cases they can no longer produce the effects intended by Christ in their primitive institution; namely, blotting out sin, and imparting sanctifying grace for the salvation of men.

382. With regard to the partaking of the infinite merits of Christ, a difficulty is sometimes proposed which calls for an answer. The merits of Christ, it is said, are no doubt of infinite value; therefore, whenever they are applied to us, we become, by that very fact, entitled to a reward infinite in its extent. Therefore all those who will share in Christ's merits, will receive in heaven the same degree of happiness.

Our answer is that the conclusion is far from being correct. For though Christ's merits are applied to countless individuals, they do not produce in all the recipients the same effects, for these vary according to each one's disposition, and consequent divine measure and dispensation. The Holy Ghost is given to all who are sanctified and become the sons of God through sacramental grace, yet they are not all equally holy; for though they all possess that divine gift, yet they do not possess it in equal measure. For the same reason the merits of Christ are communicated and applied to souls in different degrees of abundance and perfection. Therefore, though they are in themselves infinite, they are not applied infinitely, that is, so as to produce infinite effects in the recipients.

We see, then, the sublime purpose of the Incarnation: it is the establishing of a most intimate, close relation between ourselves and God, whereby all mankind is ennobled beyond all conception. Through Christ's merits we have been enriched with that highest of gifts, sanctifying grace, which enables us to be called, and actually to be the children of God and the heirs of His Kingdom. This is precisely the thought of the Apostle St. John, who wrote thus: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God: and it had not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is." †

Grace lifts us above the highest and sublimest nature. In the order of creation the angels are above men; yet, when God's grace enters into our heart, it raises us, as though by a single bound, far above the sublimest seraphim, if we consider them in their nature alone and apart from grace.

CHAPTER V

THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR THE SINS OF MEN

383. Holy Scripture in numerous passages of both Testaments bears testimony to the reality of a vicarious atonement offered by Christ through His passion and death for the expiation of men's sin.

Isaias, prophetically using the past for the future, thus speaks of the special purpose of the sufferings of the Messias: "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins." [1] According to St. Paul, atonement for sin was the principal object of the Saviour's coming into the world—"Christ died for us . . . when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." [2]

384. For reasons worthy of His infinite justice and wisdom, God did not wish to restore us to His grace, friendship, and love by an act of free pardon without exacting any reparation, as He might have done. Along with His goodness and mercy, He also intended to manifest His justice by making our reconciliation conditional on a complete and real atonement offered by the sacrifice of His own Son, thus verifying the prophetic utterance of the Royal Psalmist: "Mercy and Truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed." [3] Therefore, according to God's merciful plan of redemption, Our Saviour's death is truly the effective cause of our salvation, because God wished to make the pardon of sin subordinate to the merits of Jesus Christ. Hence, answering the Apostle Thomas, Jesus said: "I am the

† 1 John iii. 2. [1] Is. liii. 5 [2] Rom. v. 9, 10. [3] Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me."[4] John the Baptist spoke thus: "He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."[5]

What the Master and His Precursor taught Peter preached, thus addressing the assembled members of the Synagogue: "Be it known to you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him, this man [the cripple miraculously cured] standeth here before you, whole. . . . Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."[6]

If the justice of God demanded a perfect expiation and adequate satisfaction on man's part for sin, it would clearly be beyond his power to comply. Hence the necessity of the perfect expiation and full satisfaction accomplished by Christ's passion and death, whose merits applied to the sinner immensely facilitate his reconciliation.

385. But this does not exclude our own co-operation whenever possible; on the contrary, God's wisdom and justice peremptorily demand it. The initiative of our salvation is indeed God's mercy obtained for us by the merits of His Divine Son; but their application needs our correspondence to the Lord's merciful designs. For this reason St. Paul writing to the Philippians thus exhorts them: "My dearly beloved . . . with fear and trembling work out your salvation."[7] The very same truth is inculcated by the Prince of the Apostles in his second Epistle: "Brethren, labor the more that by good works you may make sure your calling and election."[8]

386. The Christian doctrine on the atonement, as stated in the pages of Holy Writ, and as held by the Catholic Church, may be summed up as follows:

God's offended majesty exacted a reparation, a satisfaction that involved the death of His Incarnate Son, the God-man, and therefore the sacrifice of the Saviour's own life, which alone could offer a satisfaction fully equal to the gravity of the offense. There was need of a perennial object lesson, that of the crucifix, to bring home to thoughtless, reckless men and women both the gravity of sin and the inexorable justice of God. Their minds and hearts could be roused to hatred of the divine offense, and timely repentance only be a peal of thunder that causes the very earth to rock beneath their feet. This must have been one of the lessons taught by the formidable events that accompanied the death of the Redeemer of the World, when, as we read in St. Matthew's Gospel, "the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent

[4] John xiv. 6. [5] John iii. 36. [6] Acts iv. 10, 12. [7] Philipp. ii. 12. [8] 2 Peter i. 10.

and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose." [9]

387. One drop of the Saviour's precious blood, it is true, sufficed for man's redemption. But what was sufficient for our Redemption, God foresaw would not be sufficient for our instruction. Hence the tragedy of Calvary. And what a tragedy! His venerable head was pierced with sharp thorns; His face was defiled by the spittings of the contemptible rabble that surrounded Him. His eyes, that looked so mercifully upon sinners, were darkened at the painful agony. His ears, so ready to listen to all supplications, are stunned by horrid blasphemies. His mouth, always open to teach heavenly doctrines, is made bitter by the potion of vinegar and gall. His shoulders, on which as the Good Shepherd He was prepared to carry the lost sheep, were pressed down by the weight of the cross. The hands that had been stretched out to cure countless diseases were transfixed with cruel nails. His feet, that traveled from place to place to announce to the multitudes the good tidings of salvation, were fastened to the wood of the cross. His sacred body, torn by scourges, was bleeding from head to foot. His tongue, that was pleading for mercy to His executioners, was made to taste the bitter beverage administered in His agony. And after His death His most loving heart was transpierced with a lance, so that all might see in that large, open wound the most evident proof of His mercy, compassion, and love toward all repenting sinners.

388. To teach us the gravity of the several kinds of sin, Christ endured special tortures, both to reveal to men their malice, and to atone for each of them in particular. Thus He was scourged at the pillar to satisfy for the sins of lust. He was crowned with thorns to atone for thoughts of hatred and for unchaste desires. He suffered on the cross a most intense thirst to satisfy for the sins of intemperance; and the same may be said of other tortures endured by our loving Saviour to atone for other criminal offenses against God's supreme majesty.

But here some one might say: "Was not our blessed Saviour scourged at the pillar, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross to save us from sin and hell?" Yes, indeed, we answer, but on one necessary, indispensable condition, that you hate sin, seek reconciliation with your offended Maker, and resolve to sin no more. Whoever fails to carry out such a resolution places himself beyond the reach of Christ's redeeming blood.

If a spark of gratitude remains in the heart of believing Christians, they should never forget the deep meaning contained in the prophetic words of Isaias, announcing the coming of the Messias, whose future sufferings had been revealed to him in a vision; hence the reason why he prophetically uses the past tense

[9] Matt. xxvii. 51, 52.

instead of the future: "Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins."[10] He not only undertook to expiate our sins, but also subjected Himself to all our miseries—barring sin—and rendered them for us meritorious of heavenly recompense. And by His own example and help He encourages us to bear them with patience, so that they may be available for eternal life. St. Augustine, treating of this subject, says: "No pride can be cured which is not healed by the humiliation of the Son of God. No avarice can be remedied, if the poverty of the Son of God will not do it. No impiety can be subdued which resists the charity and love of the Son of God."

389. As a fitting conclusion to this chapter we submit to our readers the following quotation from St. Isidore, Doctor of God's Church, and a most distinguished ornament of the Spanish episcopate. He discourses of the three reasons and three effects of the passion of our Divine Lord:

"The first was the redemption of the world. The second was to impart to men the doctrine of life, for He ascended the cross to furnish to them an example both by His passion, and by His resurrection. By His passion to strengthen them in their sufferings; by His resurrection to excite their hope. He thus exhibited to us in His flesh two lives—one laborious, the other blissful; that we might patiently bear the former and confidently hope for the latter. The third cause or reason why He assumed our flesh was to crush the pride and puffed-up wisdom of the world by what is called the foolish teaching of the cross."

"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."[11]

From the beginning to the end of His earthly life we behold in Christ manifold vicissitudes and scenes, all directed to the instruction and edification of men, in whose behalf He underwent them. He lay in a stable as a pauper; He wept in a manger as an infant; He fled into Egypt as an exile; He worked at Nazareth as a laborer; He received baptism as if He had been a sinner; He was tempted as a man; He taught in the synagogue as a master; He healed the sick as a physician; He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as a conqueror; He washed the feet of His disciples as a servant; He was bound with cords as a thief; He was accused as seducer of the people, ridiculed as a fool; scourged as a slave, crowned with thorns as a menial king; condemned to death as a blasphemer, crucified as a robber; and arose gloriously from the tomb as the God-man.

As the saintly Fr. F. W. Faber writes, "The passion and hell

[10] Is. liii. 4, 5. [11] 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

are the two great foundations out of which men learn a profound hatred of sin; they are the two wellheads of sacred fear; they are two revelations of God most necessary to complete a true idea of Him." [12]

As the treasures of Christ's redemption, atonement, and merits, and the manner and means of their application have been divinely revealed, it is quite proper for us to inquire here what should be man's attitude toward divine revelation.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT SHOULD BE A MAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DIVINE REVELATION? THE DUTY OF A MAN WHO KNOWS THAT SUCH A REVELATION EXISTS AND OF HIM WHO IS DOUBTFUL ABOUT IT

390. If the fact is once admitted that God made a revelation to mankind, man is naturally bound to receive it and to act upon it. Such an individual knows for certain that the Lord God has revealed some definite truths to be believed and some special obligations to be fulfilled. It is easy to see that he should humbly accept those truths and faithfully fulfil those obligations, thus conforming himself completely to the exigency of that revelation by believing it and acting upon it, according to the will of the Divine Revealer, his Creator and Lord. If, on the contrary, he should refuse to submit to such a revelation, he would commit a grievous violation of the natural law. For if he neglects to accept what God has revealed, it must be either because he supposes Him capable of deceiving him, by announcing what might not after all be true; or because he supposes that, when God speaks to men, or even performs miracles to authenticate His words, He is quite indifferent whether they will listen to Him or not; or again because He does not wish to submit to the divine will, made known to him through the revelation.

In all these three hypotheses he acts in direct opposition to the most peremptory duty, binding every rational creature to its sovereign Creator and greatest Benefactor. In fact, in the first case he denies God's omniscience and impugns His veracity. Secondly, He does a grievous injury to God's wisdom by inferring that He does not care whether His creatures accept or reject the truths He reveals to them. Thirdly, he rebels against God's supreme dominion over His creatures; a dominion which the Lord cannot abdicate, and from submission to which no rational being can be exempt.

When the fact of divine revelation is once ascertained, it is

[12] Spiritual Conferences, p. 418.

plain that it is God's will that the revealed truths should be accepted and believed and His commands obeyed.

The ethical argument will lead us to the same conclusion. Obligation, as all moralists teach us, is not a mere conventionality, is not a simple name, but a stern reality. In virtue of it man is really and truly obliged in conscience to perform certain actions and to avoid others, whence spring his manifold duties to God, to himself, and to his fellow-men. Now, owing to the undeniable fact that God, as Creator, holds over man a supreme, inalienable, eternal dominion, it follows that every human individual, as His creature and subject, is bound in conscience to submit to his Creator and sovereign Ruler's commands. One such command is that which imposes on all men the imperative duty to accept His revelation whenever it be sufficiently known to them as God's message to mankind.

391. And what should be the line of conduct to be adopted by those, who, from conversation with instructed Catholics, and from the perusal of Christian literature, have gathered information enough to be at least in a state of positive doubt concerning the actual existence of an authentic divine revelation? May they safely remain in such a condition of serious doubt and "take their chances," as some deluded people are wont to say? No, by no means. Let them pray for light from above, and honestly inquire into the evidences of divine truth, and their doubts will soon disappear.

All theologians agree on this point, that only a morally certain conscience constitutes a right rule of conduct. St. Paul, writing to the Romans, says: "All that is not of faith is sin."[1] As commentators observe, by "faith" is here understood judgment, conscience. The Apostle, then, meant to teach by those words that it is not lawful to follow a conscience that is practically doubtful.[2]

It has been shown in Part I that the end of man is the supernatural possession of God in the life to come. He is therefore conscientiously bound to use all the means available to him for securing the attainment of this end.

Among these means is reckoned membership with the supernatural society which has been divinely instituted for this very purpose, to enable man to reach his end. It is, therefore, the peremptory duty of every man to become a member of the Church and obey its laws. Membership in the Church is a position which entails duties, but to which also priceless privileges are attached. Chief among them is the right of participation in the sacraments, the principal means or channels by which the merits of the passion and death of Christ are applied to individuals for the express purpose of leading them to eternal salvation.[3]

[1] Rom. xiv. 23 [2] Ojetti, Synopsis, vol. i. p. 1330, 3 ed.
[3] See Hunter's Outlines of Dogmatic Theology, vol. i. p. 244.

When Almighty God, our Sovereign Lord and Master, condescends to reveal to man what he should believe, and what he should do to obtain his end; that is, to secure the eternal salvation of his immortal soul, should man remain indifferent? May he, with impunity, neglect to ascertain where such a revelation is to be found, and who is its legitimate, authorized interpreter? And if, upon honest inquiry, such a revelation be presented to him with more than sufficient evidence of its being divine truth, may he refuse to accept it, except at the peril of being punished for his rebellion? Nothing is more necessary and important for man to know than his true end and how it is to be attained. Divine Providence made ample provision for that purpose. Hence man's utter neglect on this subject makes him guilty of unpardonable contempt before his Supreme Judge and at the same time it renders him amenable to the punitive sanction for the transgression of God's holy laws. To such are applicable the following words of Jesus Christ: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin."[4] By the sin against the Holy Ghost is meant obstinate resistance to the grace of the Holy Spirit, an utter neglect, contempt and rejection of divine revelation.

CHAPTER VII

MAY A MAN EVER JUSTIFY HIS NEGLECT OF DIVINE REVELATION?

392. Some do so on the plea of the lawful exercise of their liberty, the power of doing what they will. Whoever reasons in this fashion commits more than one philosophical blunder and cannot shirk the responsibility consequent on the omission of a most sacred, imperative duty, that of accepting a fully authenticated divine revelation.

The foregoing plea implies that a man may lawfully—that is, legitimately and conscientiously—do all that he is capable of doing by the exercise of his liberty. Now, such a principle is radically wrong, for it confounds physical power with moral right, that is, physical with moral liberty. As sound philosophy teaches, there are countless cases in which we may not be allowed, on moral and legal grounds, to do what we can do by our physical powers. In other words, physical liberty is freedom from violence or coercion; moral liberty is the absence of any prohibition from legitimate authority. Thus we are all physically free to violate the laws of God, for instance, to reject divine revelation; but we are not free to do so morally, for we cannot trans-

[4] Mark iii. 29.

gress those laws without doing wrong and rendering ourselves amenable to punishment.

Moreover, the question we are answering takes it for granted that every use of liberty, whether good or bad, implies the exercise of real power, an assertion wandering far from the truth. For the possibility of doing evil through the abuse of liberty is a veritable imperfection; it is not the exercise, but the want of power in human will here on earth. As no man will see a sign of mental strength in the possibility of reasoning erroneously, so no evidence of true power is exhibited by him who uses, or rather abuses, his liberty in doing wrong. We may, therefore, say that to choose evil, to break the moral law, far from being a true power, is, on the contrary, one of the greatest marks of weakness, a veritable imperfection inherent to our present condition on earth.

Therefore, there can be true liberty without the power of choosing evil, of doing wrong. God is the freest of beings, and yet He can commit no sin. The angels and the elect in heaven possess free will, and yet they are absolutely impeccable, as fully explained in Part IV.

One of the most fatal illusions prevailing in the world is the belief, sometimes approaching conviction, that one may consider himself an honest, just, upright man so long as he discharges all his duties toward society and his fellow-creatures.

In the first place, we ask, does such an individual really fulfil all his obligations toward society and his fellow-beings by setting before them the pernicious example of irreligion, by scandalizing his brethren, by weakening their faith by his indifference, and by killing it altogether by his contempt of the Christian religion?

And what about the duties toward ourselves, the principal of which is the duty of perfecting ourselves by striving to approach the highest standard of perfection, God Himself, proposed by Christ in His Gospel to the imitation of all men? "Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."[1]

Only atheists assert that we have no duties toward God, for they deny His very existence.

Can a Christian render to each one what is due to him, if he excludes Almighty God, to whom all is due?

Does the Lord bind us to be just, grateful, and loving toward all except toward Himself, who is essential justice, boundless benevolence, and perfect love? Can that man, then, be called just, honest, and upright, who neglects his first and most peremptory duty—the worship of God, the acceptance of His revelation, and the fulfilment of the obligations which it imposes?

[1] Matt. v. 48.

CHAPTER VIII

ADDITIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON HUMAN LIBERTY

393. Our salvation depends on our free co-operation with God's grace by the right use of our liberty. According to Holy Scripture, human liberty is threefold: the liberty of nature, the liberty of grace and the liberty of glory. By the first, inherent in our nature, we are freed from any intrinsic necessity or compulsion; by the second we are delivered from the slavery of sin; by the third we are exempted from every kind of misery.

The first—that is, natural liberty—is received at creation, and is clearly described in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: "God made man from the beginning and left him in the hands of his own counsel. . . . Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him."[1] To enable man to make a legitimate and eternally beneficial use of that precious gift, "The Lord added His commandments and precepts,"[2] that their observance might infallibly lead him to the attainment of his last end, everlasting happiness.

Of the same natural liberty St. Paul writes as follows in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "He that hath determined . . . having no necessity, but having power of his own will."[3] Deny this liberty and what would be the result? It would follow that the greatest hero in the moral world would be no better than the worst criminal that ever lived, for both would be inevitably determined to their actions, whether good or evil. Only freedom differentiates a knave from a saint in the moral order.

The second—that is, the liberty of grace, or freedom from sin—we receive in redemption through Christ's sacramental grace, particularly through Baptism and Penance. Our Blessed Saviour said: "Amen, Amen, I say unto you: that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."[4] And it was precisely to deliver us from the slavery of sin that He came to live among sinners. In fact, the whole purpose or object of our Redeemer's mission is summarily contained in the following words of St. Paul: "That the body of sin may be destroyed to the end that we may serve sin no longer."[5]

To the Jews who said: "We have never been slaves to any man," Jesus answered: "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."[6]

Thirdly, we shall possess the liberty of glory, immunity from all sufferings, when we shall reach life eternal.

[1] Ecclus. xv. 14, 18. [2] Ibid. xv. 15. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 37. [4] John viii. 34. [5] Rom. vi. 6. [6] John viii. 33, 36.

394. As in the course of our treatise we frequently refer to man's liberty, we deem it advisable to state here the teaching of Catholic philosophy on this subject. We must distinguish three kinds of liberty, the exact knowledge of which is needed to prevent misconception and misunderstanding on this vital question.

The first is freedom from extrinsic coercion or immunity from violence or force impeding man's free activity. This is styled physical liberty. The second is freedom from intrinsic necessity, in virtue of which a rational agent, when all conditions for acting are present, may perform a given action or not according to the deliberation of his will. The third kind of freedom implies an agent's untrammeled activity, so long as he is not bound by any moral obligation forbidding a certain line of actions. This is called moral liberty.

In accordance with these principles of right reason, sanctioned by Christian faith, a man may be free to stand or to walk; he may feel no interior compulsion interfering with his deliberations. But in the exercise of his liberty he cannot exempt himself from complying with the ordinances of his lawful superior regulating his moral conduct and forbidding some determined line of action.

A correct conception of liberty is contained in the following sentence: "*Etre libre c'est faire ce qu' on veut, en faisant ce qu' on doit.*"—"To be free is to do what one wills, whilst doing what one ought." To act on this principle is to make a lawful use of one's liberty, or free will.

395. But here some might take exception to the last statement and say: The very essence of liberty consists in the power of choosing either good or evil. As liberty, a natural gift, remains intact in all rational creatures, and therefore in the blessed, we must conclude that they will forever be able to choose either good or evil. They cannot, therefore, be said to be impeccable and immutable, for moral immutability, of which we here speak, is a perfection proper of God alone.

Answer: This difficulty, revived in our days, is of very ancient date. It was first devised by Origen and was intended to justify one of his erroneous doctrines regarding the condition of the saints in heaven. He held and taught that, owing to their possession of the gift of liberty, they could fall away from grace, repent, and then again prevaricate, thus passing through a cycle of successive, indefinite transmutations. This error was condemned by Pope Vigilius about the year 550.[7]

But let us address ourselves to the difficulty stated above. The whole structure of Origen's reasoning rests on a false foundation, that is, on an erroneous conception of liberty. As sound philosophy teaches us, by "liberty" is meant the faculty and right to choose by oneself without hindrance. It implies im-

[7] See D. Enchiridion, p. 87.

munity from any external or internal constraint. Hence it does not involve the power or right to choose evil, as the objection assumes. The so-called power or right to choose evil, to transgress the moral law, to stray from our last end, far from being a true power, is, on the contrary, an imperfection inherent to our will as long as we are on earth during the trial proper of the present life. Neither may it be called a right to do evil, for if it were a right, no one could be punished for evil-doing. In fact, God, though the freest of beings, cannot will anything but what is good: and the saints in heaven, though enjoying full liberty, will never choose evil; therefore they shall never forfeit their present happiness by the commission of sin. As to the attribute of immutability, God alone is essentially immutable: the saints are immutable not by essence or nature, but by participation in the degree that can be communicated to creatures.

It is gratifying to be able to confirm the preceding explanation by the authority of two distinguished Doctors of Holy Church, St. Anselm and St. Thomas. The former, quoted by the Angelical, speaks as follows: "The faculty or power of committing sin is not a part of true liberty."

"I do not think that liberty consists in the power of sinning or not sinning, for, if such were the definition of liberty, neither God nor the angels could be said to be free, since they cannot sin."[8]

Let us see what the Calvinists and the Presbyterians of the sixteenth century held on the subject of liberty. We find it distinctly stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the authorized exponent of their creed. In Chapter IX "Of Free Will," N. 111, we read: "Man, by the fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." This doctrine is diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Catholic Church, who holds that, though grace is necessary for salvation, yet man, even after the fall, that is, after contracting the stain of original sin, is free either to respond to the motions of grace or to resist them. This may be called the perversion of man's liberty in the spiritual or supernatural order.[9]

The concept of liberty in the natural order has been thoroughly misconstrued and perverted by three modern philosophers of the rationalistic school, Immanuel Kant, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill.

Kant: "Every one is free to seek his own happiness in the way that seems good to himself, so long as he does not infringe the freedom of others."

Spencer: "Every man may do that which he wills, provided he does not interfere with the equal freedom of any other man."

[8] De Veritate, q. xxiv., art. 10. See part iv, ch. v, vi.

[9] Schaff, vol. iii. p. 623.

Mill: "The only part of the conduct of any one, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is of right, absolute."

Hence, according to this new ethical theory, every man is at liberty to do whatever he pleases, and to break every commandment of the Decalogue a hundred times a day, on the sole condition that none of his fellow-creatures is made to suffer by it. To act on this immoral principle is to remove every restraint from human passions, and to sanction the most criminal conduct.[10]

St. Augustine, recalling the blessings of redemption, present and future, thus addressed his Christian brethren: "Why are you sad? Why should you care for this world's paltry goods? You have a heavenly Father to think of and provide for you; you are destined for a heavenly country, eternal happiness." Listen to the cheering words of the beloved disciple: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."[11]

We insert here a few additional reflections concerning God's plan in men's salvation and their co-operation:

396. The words of Christ to the Jews of Capharnaum, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die."[12] And those addressed to Martha, sister of Lazarus: "He that believeth in Me, though he be dead, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever."[13] These words, I say, do not mean that the worthy reception of the body and blood of Christ is Holy Communion, together with belief in Christ, were to deliver us from death and the corruption of the grave, for after Christ's redemption, quite as much as before it, we all are subject to the sentence pronounced against Adam: "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."[14]

In accordance with God's most wise and just counsels, the mystery of Christ's Incarnation and Redemption was not to deliver us from the miseries and evils of the present life, particularly death and the corruption of our bodies in the grave, but to free us from the cause of those evils, i. e., sin, the consequences of which the Divine Redeemer was sent to remedy and repair.

Here we must not overlook the fact that another highly beneficent fruit of redeeming grace enables us to turn all the sufferings, trials, and evils of time into sources of merit for life eternal, according to St. Paul's words: "To them that love God, all things work together unto good."[15]

[10] Faith and Folly, by Msgr. Vaughan, p. 302. Second ed.
[11] 1 John iii. 2. [12] John vi. 50. [13] John xi. 25, 26. [14] Gen. iii. 19.
[15] Rom. viii. 28.

Hence in both the above-mentioned passages of St. John's Gospel (vi. 50; xi. 25, 26), Christ spoke not of immunity or deliverance from natural death, but of the glorious, immortal life of the risen bodies of all who die in Christ. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. . . . That they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them."[16] To this triumphant resurrection our Blessed Saviour referred when He said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise Him up in the last day."[17]

397. The real question is not whether the salvation of all men is the will of God, as undoubtedly it is, but whether He wills to force salvation on unwilling recipients. Such a view is not only in direct contradiction to the letter and spirit of Holy Scripture, but to all we know of God's attributes and of our own mental faculties. If man is a moral agent, free to accept or refuse the gracious offer of Redemption, no multiplicity of assertions of the universality of that offer can disprove the sad fact of such offer of grace being rejected by the obstinacy of some individuals, who thus frustrate God's benevolent designs. Universalists are wont to fill pages with passages from the Scripture, asserting the many offers of grace tendered to sinners, God's will that all men should be saved, the shedding of Christ's blood for the salvation of all men, etc. Such statements, which may be multiplied indefinitely, are indeed conclusive against the heretical Calvinistic doctrine that Christ died only for the elect, but they leave untouched the further question, which depends not on the will of God, but on that of men, whether all will in fact avail themselves of the proffered gift. It is a rule not merely of Scriptural exegesis, but of common sense, to interpret what is doubtful or obscure by what is clear and explicit, not vice versa. By acting on this rule, different quotations bearing on the same subject are completely harmonized, and all apparent contradiction between texts is entirely eliminated.

CHAPTER IX

ACTION OF GOD AND RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN IN THE BUSINESS OF SALVATION

398. As it will be demonstrated at full length in Part VI following, hell and its torments are constantly declared in Holy Writ to be not of God's but of man's making. St. Bernard uttered a great truth when he said: "*Tantummodo humana voluntas ardet in inferno.*"—"Only human will burns in hell."

[16] Apoc. xiv. 13. [17] John vi. 55.

Man was endowed by His Creator with every power and faculty for enjoying happiness, both here and hereafter. And it is clearly God's earnest desire that all men should attain the end for which they exist. He made ample provision for the effacement of sin so that even the most inveterate transgressor might be restored to His favor. Through the Church, its ministers, and the most loyal portion of Christ's flock, most fervent appeals are continually made to God on behalf of poor sinners. In the sacramental system most efficacious spiritual helps are treasured up, available whenever needed, and infallible in their effects, so long as they are worthily received. Through them the soul is enabled to conquer its most formidable enemies, and overcome the most persistent opposition from the world, the devil, and the flesh. We are intimately conscious of the fact that we may at any moment exercise the power of choice in any direction. There are, no doubt, influences at work in determining our choice; personal inclinations and surroundings must be reckoned with. Yet it is certain that, aided by divine grace, placed at our disposal in answer to prayer, we may, by a brave, powerful effort of the will, act directly contrary to all opposing obstacles, and allow a higher motive to overcome and victoriously crush them.

We have seen what is the doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding man's salvation, which has been proved to depend on his free, deliberate co-operation with divine grace; a doctrine, which, while safeguarding the liberty of man, asserts at the same time the necessity of the grace of God—a heavenly gift promised and given to all, and amply sufficient to enable them to attain their last end, the eternal salvation of their soul.

St. Augustine, in his usual ingenious language, summed up that doctrine in the two following brief sentences: "Were it not for the grace of Christ, how could God save the world? . . . And were it not for the liberty of man, how could God judge the world?" As will be seen in the next chapter, if we contrast the Catholic doctrine on predestination with Calvin's horrible creed, it will be easy to determine which of the two systems, the Catholic or the Calvinist, can be said to be in harmony with God's attributes, with Holy Scripture and tradition, with the testimony of the Holy Fathers, and with the dictates of human reason and common sense.

399. A fairly complete treatment of the divine provisions for the eternal salvation of such persons as may live and die outside the pale of the Catholic Church does not precisely lie within the scope of our work; and any attempted discussion of the topic would unduly swell the size of our volume.

We will, however, briefly set down some considerations bearing on this subject and quote some Papal documents with a view to justify Divine Providence, and repel the common

charges of injustice brought against it by rationalists and ill-instructed Christians.

The formula, "Outside of the Church there is no salvation," has always seemed to our non-Catholic friends a hard and intolerant doctrine; but when well understood it appears to be neither intolerant nor uncharitable. No man ever comes to the exercise of reason and the age of responsibility without obtaining from God sufficient aid to save his soul. No one is excluded from the redeeming atonement and merits of Christ. "God, our Saviour, will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."[1] To enable all men always to have at hand the means of salvation, Christ established His Church, endowing it with the following characteristic notes, in it alone fully verified: Holiness, Unity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity, and enjoined on all men the solemn duty of becoming members of His Church. Now, those who know this divine command and still refuse, for no justifiable reason, to enter the Church, cannot be saved, because they flout what they know to be an express divine command.

Those who doubt whether they should become members of Christ's Church, but refuse to investigate its claims, lest they be logically forced to belong to it, are evidently in bad faith, and cannot lay any claim to salvation. Of such speaks the Psal. xxxv. 4.

400. But what about those people who, through no fault of their own, had no opportunity to learn that the Catholic Church is really a divine institution, to which all are commanded to belong? If such persons are anxious to find out the truth and would be quite ready to enter the Church if only they knew their obligation to do so, observing meanwhile the injunctions of the natural moral law and persevering in such dispositions up to their death, the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, the greatest of theologians, assures us that God will supply all that is needed for salvation in their behalf, even performing a miracle, if necessary, in order to bring them within the reach of Christ's redeeming and saving grace.

From the strict, divinely imposed obligation of joining the Catholic Church, are we to conclude that every one who, through no fault of his own, is not visibly a member of the Catholic Church, is hopelessly reprobate? No, this cannot be, for the simple reason that no one can be lost except by his own fault. Hence, if a non-Catholic, through no personal fault, fails to recognize the claims of the Catholic Church; if he quite honestly and conscientiously persuades himself that the Catholic Church, bristling with errors and superstitions, cannot be looked upon as the Church of Christ, then this ignorance may excuse him. Such a person, however, can claim no exemption from the ob-

[1] Tim. ii. 3, 4.

servance of the moral law binding all men, a law and obligation which no one can ignore.

401. The pontifical utterances of Pope Pius IX will be in place here.

In his Allocution of December 9, 1854, he spoke thus:

"We must hold as certain that ignorance of the true religion, when it is invincible, excuses from all fault in the eyes of the Lord. And who would now dare arrogate to himself the right of determining the limits of this ignorance, given the varieties of peoples, and countries, of minds and of so many other circumstances?"

Similar considerations were put forward by the same sovereign Pontiff in his Encyclical Letter of August 11, 1863:

"Every one knows that those who are afflicted by an invincible ignorance in regard to our holy religion, but faithfully observe the natural law, the precepts of which have been engraved by God on the hearts of all men, and who, being ready to obey God, actually lead a good and upright life, such individuals can, by the action of the divine light and the power of grace, attain to eternal life. God, in fact, who sees the inmost recesses and secrets, the minds, the hearts, the thoughts and dispositions of all, will not, in His goodness and sovereign clemency, suffer any one to incur everlasting punishment who is not guilty of a voluntary grievous fault."

God's providence extends to all His rational creatures. He has given them the light of reason. He has written the precepts of the natural law upon their hearts. He does not leave them unassisted by His grace; hence no one will be condemned for not knowing truths which he had no means of knowing.

The teaching of the Catholic Church on the present question may be thus briefly stated: Outside the Church there is no salvation, that is, for those who, having known the claims of the Church and the obligation of associating themselves to it as members, neglected to enter it. Those, on the contrary, who are in good faith, and inculpably ignorant of its divine origin and institution, will receive, outside of it—that is, independently of the ordinary channels—the graces needed for their salvation.

In short, no one is saved but by God's grace, which is available for salvation so long as it is not wilfully rejected. No one is lost but by his own fault—that is, through resistance to and rejection of divine grace.

Let us also bear in mind the following authoritative testimonies concerning the Gentiles that lived before the Christian era. It is admitted that also among the gentile nations people were saved, but they were not saved without faith in the divine Mediator. Though they did not have an explicit faith in Him,

yet they had an implicit faith in the Creator's providence, believing that God was the deliverer of man according to the modes and means chosen by Him.[2]

"For Gentiles to be saved, it was enough that they should believe that God was to be the Redeemer of mankind, and that He would deliver them from their miseries, though they ignored the details of that mystery."[3]

"A large number of people, before the coming of Christ, believed in God and looked upon Him as their future Saviour, though they knew not when nor how their salvation was to be wrought, yet they had a faith sufficient for their salvation."[4]

The above quoted Doctors, in other parts of their works, do not fail to remark that, as the observance of the natural law was for the Gentiles the best guarantee of their salvation, so its violation in grievous matters offered the greatest hindrance to it.

Is not our doctrine as stated above irreprehensible in the eyes of every fair-minded man?

402. Hence, to say "Out of the true Church there is no salvation" is simply to assert what our Divine Saviour Himself proclaimed in the clearest language: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."[5] We Catholics are accused of being uncharitable for holding these principles of revealed faith. Is it uncharitable to say that no one can be saved without keeping God's commandments? Is not this exactly what Our Saviour said when He answered that pertinent question, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" Christ replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."[6] If we say that no one can be saved without baptism, our warrant rests on the Redeemer's words: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."[7] For a like reason it is not uncharitable to say that no one can be saved without professing the true Faith, since St. Paul wrote long ago that "Without faith it is impossible to please God."[8]

It is certainly not uncharitable to make people aware of the warnings of the Gospel and thereby help them to discard delusive human schemes of salvation producing a false security, which sooner or later will lead them to irrevocable misery, where regret and repentance come too late.

403. As to members of Christian denominations separated from the Catholic religion, we freely admit that, under the conditions laid down above, they may actually be saved. This is quite true;

[2] St. Thomas 2^a, 2^{ae}, qu. 2, art. vii.
[3] St. Bonaventure. In 111 Sent., Dist. 25.
[4] St. Bernard, On Baptism [5] Mark xvi. 16.
[6] Matt. xix. 16, 17. [7] John iii. 5. [8] Heb. xi. 6.

but it is equally certain that they will be saved not by means of Protestantism, but in spite of it—in fact, in the very teeth of it. Protestantism as such has no saving power; hence, whoever is saved in that system, is saved not in so far as he is a Protestant, but in so far as he is a Catholic, though not knowing it. This assertion, though somewhat startling, is nevertheless perfectly true. In fact, a good conservative Protestant believes in God, in His justice and mercy; he believes in Christ as his Divine Master and Saviour, in the regenerating power of Baptism, in the efficacy of prayer for obtaining heavenly grace, and in the necessity of sorrow for sin. Where did he get these doctrines from? From the Roman Catholic Church, whence the sixteenth-century Reformers carried them away when they rebelled against and seceded from it. They are all purely Catholic doctrines, and as such they may be the means of supernatural grace, and eternal salvation to those who yield to their influence.

404. But the genuine and distinctive Protestant doctrines can save nobody. On the contrary, they can but hinder and impede salvation. But what are these genuine Protestant doctrines? They are the exclusively Protestant doctrines. For instance, the doctrines that Mass is a blasphemous superstition; that the successor of St. Peter, the Pope, is not the Head of the Church, but a usurper; that he has no prerogative of infallibility; that there are not seven sacraments, but only two; that Christ is not substantially present in the Holy Eucharist; that there is no Purgatory; that the invocation of the saints is contrary to Bible teaching; that the Scripture needs no divinely authorized interpreter. Now, these and similar doctrines are distinctly and genuinely Protestant tenets, incapable of saving any one, since they are utterly false and pernicious and, as such, cannot be employed by Almighty God as channels of grace and instruments of salvation.

The good, honest, sincere, God-fearing Protestants, of whom no doubt, there are many, will attain eternal life, not on account of their Protestantism, but only in virtue of the Catholic doctrines which were borrowed from the only true and infallible Church of God, whose center is at Rome, but whose circumference is the world.

Let it then be understood that it is possible for a non-Catholic to be saved, but saved conditionally. And the conditions, conformable to God's wisdom, goodness, and justice, and in perfect accordance with the present order of providence, are these:

1. That one has no means whatever of knowing and recognizing the true Church of Christ, in which case he is evidently exempt from the obligation of embracing it. It is a case of invincible ignorance.

2. That one should not be conscientiously guilty of having offended his Creator in any serious, grievous matter.

3. That if he should be aware of such guilt, he should duly repent of it through motives prompted by his love of God, that is, through a repentance equivalent to what theologians call perfect contrition. We have every reason to believe that the infinite goodness of God, who wills all men to be saved, will grant such a grace in answer to the petitioner's earnest prayer, a means placed by Divine Providence within the reach of all.

The reader is here reminded of the doctrine of St. Thomas, who expresses himself thus: "Though the grace of conversion is not granted in view of personal merits, yet it is necessary that man should do what is in his power, and God's unbounded liberality will grant it to every one that prepares himself for it, particularly by removing the chief obstacle to its reception, sin." The holy Doctor confirms his teaching by the following pertinent words of the Son of God in the Apocalypse: "Behold I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him."[9] It is a principle of Catholic theology that "God does not refuse His grace to him that does what is in his power."

405. Let us see, by way of contrast, the guarantees of truth, and the means of salvation, which Divine Providence furnishes to men within the pale of the Catholic Church.

The exterior, perfect organization of the Church consists of the Pope, the visible representative of Christ, its invisible Head; of the bishops in communion with the Holy See; of the priests ordained by those bishops; and of the community of the faithful united under the care of priests, their pastors. Ask the Catholic priest: "Who gave you the right to direct and govern me in what concerns the eternal salvation of my soul?" The priest will direct you to his bishop, by whose authority he exercises the sacred ministry. Ask the bishop: "Who gave you this right and jurisdiction over the priests and faithful of your diocese?" And he, in his turn, will answer: "I hold this authority from the Pope." Ask the Pope, and he replies: "I possess the same power which my predecessors held." Pass up the long line of Supreme Pontiffs, and every one will give you the same answer, until you come to Peter. Ask him: "Whence hast thou this authority?" He will point to Christ and Christ Himself will make answer: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth."[10] It is Christ that said to Peter, His first vicar: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[11] He, therefore, who submits himself to the Church, submits to Christ, and he who submits to Christ, submits to God. "He that heareth you," said the Saviour to His Apostles and their successors, "heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me."[12]

[9] Apoc. iii. 20. [10] Matt. xxviii. 18. [11] Matt. xvi. 18. [12] Luke x. 16.

As to the means of salvation left by the Saviour of the world to the Church He founded, they have been pointed out in this Fifth Part in the chapter on the Benefits of Grace. Here we shall briefly refer the reader to the forgiveness of sin in the sacrament of Penance. The sentence of absolution which the priest pronounces upon earth is endorsed and ratified in heaven. God confirms his decision, or, to speak more properly, his decision is that of God Himself. This is indeed a most merciful power delivering us from sin, the only evil that can close the portals of heaven against us, and open under our feet the dread abyss of hell. After all, our great need, our only need, is the pardon of our sins. Where shall we look in this wide world for deliverance from that monster, the canker of sin? Not to ourselves, for we can fall, but possess no inherent power to rise. Not to earthly potentates, for they have no jurisdiction there. Where then shall we look for deliverance? Not to any angel, however mighty, nor to any saint, however holy; for sin is a bigger mountain than they have power to move. Nay, we cannot look for direct and immediate deliverance from that evil to the crowned Queen of Heaven, sinless Mary, for not even her holiness can atone for sin nor her spotless purity blot out its deadly stain. Forgiveness does come to us only from the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and it is through the priests that His merits are actually applied to cleanse and beautify repentant souls. All this we learn from St. Peter's words: "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."[13]

(For a considerable portion of this chapter we are indebted to the pamphlet "Is there Salvation Outside the Church?" by Right Rev. Msgr. John Vaughan.)

CHAPTER X

I

CALVIN'S HIDEOUS TEACHINGS ON PREDESTINATION AS CONTRASTED WITH THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

It is greatly to be lamented that not a few honest investigators gather their knowledge of the Christian religion from the poisonous system of Calvin and his disciples, instead of deriving it from the pure, unsullied fountain of Catholic faith. This highly regrettable fact explains their attitude of hostility toward the Church, whom they hold responsible for the very views of man's damnation which she condemned as heretical as soon as they appeared.

[13] Acts iv. 12.

406. According to Calvin's creed, which followed from his perverse distortion of the doctrine of original sin, this is the meaning of predestination: "We behold the mercy of God in the gratuitous salvation of the elect, independently of any worthiness on their part; and we see God's justice in the preordained damnation of the reprobates, who are excluded from all access to eternal life. Things are so disposed by an eternal and immutable decree of the Lord." This was the ghastly caricature of everlasting punishment which Mr. Mill, senior, learned from the Scotch Presbyterian school, and which, after causing him to reject Christianity, drove him into atheism. It is this distorted Calvinistic theory of predestination representing the great multitude of mankind as condemned to perdition, not by their own fault, but by the sovereign will of the Creator, that the Catholic Church condemned as a deadly heresy. To mention one of the debasing and brutalizing effects of this abominable doctrine, it is said that Lord Byron, believing himself a reprobate, used all diligence to make his calling and election to perdition sure; a frightful state of mind, based not on the Catholic dogma of eternal punishment but on the execrable creed of Calvinistic reprobation.

Either through malice or unpardonable ignorance, writers hostile to the Catholic Church represent this horrible Calvinistic doctrine as the genuine official teachings of Rome.

407. We here briefly explain the doctrine of the Catholic Church on this important point.

On account of His antecedent or first will, as theologians tell us, God wills some particular thing, fact, or event independently of circumstances relative to such thing, fact, or event. Thus, He wills that all men be saved.[1] By His consequent or second will God wishes some facts or events depending on some circumstances or conditions, as when it is His will that rational creatures who offend Him grievously and persevere till death in impenitence should be punished eternally.[2] Even in regard to these, God's first or antecedent will is that they should be saved; it is only the circumstance or fact of their persevering malice that frustrates the first will and causes the second or consequent will to have its course.

408. In other words, it is God's will that all men be saved by means of and on condition of their free co-operation with His grace, whenever such a co-operation is possible. The loss of souls, then, occurs when such condition is not fulfilled, which can happen only through the free, deliberate abuse of one's free will. God, to whose infinite mind all things, past, present, and to come, are perfectly known, simply foresees that rebellious, obstinate sinners will not attain the end for which He destined them; a knowledge which in no way interferes with the freedom and responsibility of men; for their voluntary actions are not

[1] Tim. ii. 4. [2] Matt. xxxv. 41.

performed because God foresees them, but He foresees them because they will be freely performed. What, then, is meant by the dogma of eternal damnation? It means, in one word, leaving the sinner to himself. It is no arbitrary infliction of a vengeful Deity, as scoffers are fond of phrasing it; it is simply that God has at length withdrawn from His rebellious creature the care and generous aid he had pertinaciously despised and finally rejected. The blessing comes from God, the curse from the sinner himself. "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me."[3] Man was created an immortal, responsible being, placed in a state of probation, and endowed with excellent gifts both of nature and of grace; and, as on the right use of those gifts depends the favor of his Maker, so on their wrong use or abuse follows the fulfilment of his Master's threat. Hence there is no injustice in the withdrawal of God's friendship from those who deliberately abuse the graces and opportunities they have received; and when this abuse is carried on even to the bitter end, the close of one's earthly life, the period of his probation, and thus becomes final and complete, the isolation from God and from all good must also be final and complete. The impenitent sinner has missed the final end of his creation through his own free, deliberate choice. The real question, then, is not whether the salvation of all men is the will of God, as undoubtedly it is, but whether He wills to force salvation on unwilling recipients; a view directly contradicted by Holy Scripture and opposed to the most obvious dictates of human reason. In damnation the *fiat* of eternal perdition issues from the will not of the Creator but of the creature, who has preferred darkness to light and has deliberately rejected the love that wooed, but failed to win him.

The Catholic doctrine is summed up by theologians in the two following propositions:

PROPOSITION I

The formal election or predestination of adults to eternal glory is decreed by God only in consequence of their foreseen future merits.

PROPOSITION II

Positive, antecedent reprobation is repugnant to Catholic faith. Hence the damnation of the reprobates is decreed exclusively in view of their foreseen demerits and final impenitence.[4]

[3] Osee xiii. 9.

[4] Schiffini, Thesis xix. et xx.

II

ON THE FUTURE STATE OR CONDITION OF CHILDREN WHO DIE WITHOUT RECEIVING HOLY BAPTISM

409. Among the charges made by unbelievers against God's providence is that derived from the future state of children who die unbaptized. Basing their assertion on Calvin's creed, according to which God has absolutely doomed a portion of mankind with their unbaptized infant children to everlasting damnation, they accuse Divine Providence of cruelty and injustice. Though what we said in a preceding article on Calvin's horrible creed, branded by the Catholic Church as blasphemous and heretical, is amply sufficient to refute modern unbelievers regarding the point at issue, yet we deem it advisable to treat this question at some length in special chapters. This will afford us the opportunity of clearly stating the doctrine of the Church on the future state of children dying without spiritual regeneration through Baptism, and of vindicating, at the same time, the justice of God's providence in this respect.

CHAPTER XI

WHAT IS THE PENALTY OF ORIGINAL SIN IN THE FUTURE WORLD?

410. It is a doctrine of revealed truth that children departing from this world without Baptism, who therefore retain on their soul the stain of original sin, are excluded from the supernatural beatitude which, as shown in Part IV, consists essentially in the beatific vision. This dogmatic truth rests on the explicit words of Jesus Christ Himself, registered in St. John's Gospel. Answering Nicodemus, He said: "Amen, Amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [1]

Theologians distinguish a twofold necessity, which they call a necessity of means *(medii)*; and a necessity of command or of precept *(præcepti)*. The former indicates a thing to be so necessary that if it is wanting (though inculpably) salvation cannot be attained. The latter occurs when a thing is indeed so necessary that, because commanded, it may not be omitted voluntarily without sin; yet ignorance of the precept or inability to fulfil it excuses one from its observance. Baptism is held to be necessary both by the necessity of means, and by the necessity of command.

Christ, when enjoining Baptism, makes no exception to this

[1] John iii 5.

law, which is therefore general in its application, comprising both adults and infants. This is the sense in which it has always been understood by the Church; and the Council of Trent [2] teaches that justification cannot be obtained, since the promulgation of the Gospel, without the laver of regeneration, or the desire thereof *(in voto)* when possible.

That the application of such a divine ordinance to some creatures involves no injustice whatever will be proved in a subsequent chapter.

As the documents to be alleged will clearly show, in the mind of the Church, the only penalty incurred by the infants we speak of is that which is due to human creatures not freed from original sin; namely, the exclusion from the beatific vision in God's heavenly kingdom. If further inquiries are made regarding their condition before and after the general resurrection, we find that no explicit dogmatic decrees have as yet been issued by the Catholic Church on those points.

Hence Catholic writers are at liberty to discuss various questions concerning the future state of unbaptized children so long as they advance no views conflicting with other explicitly defined doctrines of revelation. The main question is to inquire whether they are enduring any sensitive or physical pain at all, however slight.

We here affirm that we hold the negative view, as expressed in the following proposition:

"The only penalty due to original sin in the next life is the privation of the supernatural beatitude, the vision of God, with the complete exclusion of sensitive physical pain, particularly of hell's fire."

411. This contention is fully supported by Pontifical authority, the majority of the Greek and the Latin Fathers, and the almost unanimous consent of theologians.

Innocent III, in determining the essential difference between original and actual or personal sin, speaks as follows:

"Original sin is that which is contracted without any consent; actual sin is that which is contracted with consent. Hence the punishment of original sin, if not effaced, is the privation of the beatific vision, the pain of loss without the penalty of fire. The punishment of actual sin, if not cancelled by repentance, is the torment of eternal hell.[3]

The same doctrine is taught by Pius VI in his constitution *Auctorem Fidei*, dated August 28, A. D. 1794, condemning the schismatical and heretical Synod of Pistoia, and asserting the complete exemption of unbaptized infants from the penalty of fire.[4] Father Palmieri, S. J., in his treatise, *De Deo Creante*, page 649, draws from the above Pontifical document the following conclusions:

[2] Sess. vii, c. v. [3] D. Enchiridion, pp. 188, 404. [4] D. Enchiridion, p. 404.

1. The doctrine holding that deceased unbaptized children suffer only the pain of loss, and are therefore free from the pain of sense, is conformable to Catholic teachings.

2. Such a doctrine is publicly sanctioned by the present decree of the Apostolic See.

3. The same doctrine may be safely held, notwithstanding the contrary opinion of some Latin Fathers alleged by the advocates of the opposite view.[5]

The Greek Fathers, among whom the two Gregories, the Nazianzen and the Nyssan, state in their writings that in the apostolic tradition there is no mention of positive sufferings to be undergone by those, who have not been guilty of any personal sin.[6]

The holy doctor St. Ambrose, one of the most learned Latin Fathers, writes as follows: "No one ascends into the kingdom of heaven except by means of the sacrament of Baptism; this we learn from Christ Himself.[7] To this law there is no exception. The unbaptized infants, however, enjoy immunity from pain."[8]

Another of the Latin Fathers, St. Bernard, thus speaks: "What does God hate and punish but the abuse of the free will? Should there be no such abuse in the present life, there would be no hell's punishment in the next."

412. On the status or condition of unbaptized children Pope Innocent III decreed as follows: "The punishment of original sin is the privation of the vision of God; the penalty of actual sin is hell's eternal torment."[9]

The sensitive pain results from the privation of natural good and is incurred on account of the creature's turning to earthly goods, which is done by the commission of actual, personal sin. There can be no sadness in the unbaptized infants, for right reason does not demand that one should suffer for what it was not in his power to avoid. Neither are they subject to any pain or affliction, for this is due only on account of a guilty gratification, which had no place in the original sin which they incurred. They know, in a general way, that they were created for happiness, and that happiness consists in the attainment of perfect good; but they do not know in particular that man was destined for the beatific vision, for this knowledge is the gift of faith, which they did not receive, as they were deprived of the grace of Baptism. Hence the loss of that destiny can cause in them neither sadness nor regret. "*Ignoti nulla cupido.*"—"There can be no desire of a good unknown."[10]

[5] See also page 665 of Palmieri's cited treatise where he refutes the contrary opinion of Cardinal Noris.

[6] See Palmieri, quoted above, and also Suarez, vol. xix. p. 935—Edition Vives, Paris.

[7] John iii. 5.

[8] Serm. de Abraham,

[9] L. III. Decr., tit. 42, c. 3.

[10] St. Thomas, De Malo

If we consider the loss of the beatific vision as the good of which one is deprived on account of sin, the evil of guilt, it is indeed a most grievous penalty, deservedly called by St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom the greatest that angels or men could incur. But if we look upon it as a supernatural good to which no creature can lay claim, then its loss may be regarded as a very light penalty, like that of some individual who should be prevented from acquiring possession of a kingdom to which he has no inherent right whatever. It is this sense that St. Augustine qualifies the privation of the beatific vision in unbaptized children as a "*mitissima poena,*" "a very light penalty." Such is the opinion of some theologians under the leadership of St. Thomas.

As we learn from Catholic theology, original sin is not caused by the will of those who contract it, but by the will of him (Adam) who committed it. Hence sensitive punishment is due only to actual, personal sin.

Cardinal Sfrondati [11] declares that, while unchristened infants are certainly excluded from heaven, yet they are not deprived of natural happiness. Since the twelfth century the opinion of the majority of theologians has been that unbaptized children are exempt from all pain of sense. This was taught by St. Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, Peter Lombard, St. Bonaventure, and others, and is now the common teaching of the schools with the very few exceptions referred to below.

The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, in his Quest. Disput. De Malo [12] and in other parts of his writings, asserts the same doctrine and alleges the following reasons: "As the pain of sense is a punishment intended to chastise the sinful personal act, by which sinners turn to created goods; so to original sin there corresponds only one penalty, that of loss. But in personal, wilful transgressions we find both aversion from God and turning to creatures; hence the reason of the twofold punishment—that of loss, and that of sense."

The same holy Doctor calls this the common doctrine held by theologians with very few exceptions. It is the doctrine practically professed by the Church, as she never countenanced the opposite teaching, though she has not as yet issued any dogmatic definition on the subject.

Suarez writes: "Unbaptized children, as all theologians teach, will not suffer sensible pains." [13]

413. What is defined in the second General Council of Lyons (A. D. 1274) and repeated in that of Florence (A. D. 1439); namely, that unbaptized children are to be punished with pains *(disparibus)* different from those to be endured by adults who die in mortal sin, does not mean that their pains will be lighter

[11] In Nodo Praedestinationis I. [12] Qu. v, art. 2.
[13] Vol. xix. p. 935. Edit. Vives.

than those of the reprobates. That expression was intended to point out the specific difference between the lots assigned to those two classes of human creatures; and the difference consists in this, that unbaptized infants will only suffer the pain of loss.

Hence we cannot subscribe to the opinion of Cardinal Noris, an Augustinian, who goes so far as to assert that his view, which is opposed to our thesis, is confirmed by the unanimous consent of the Supreme Pontiffs, the General Councils, and the Fathers. What we stated above shows that the assertion of Cardinal Noris is utterly destitute of foundation. Hence we feel fully justified in holding the doctrine which is found to be conformable to the tradition of the Church, the sentiments of the Holy Fathers, and the opinion of the great majority of Catholic theologians, as noted above.

414. As we previously remarked, the pains of sense are not the punishment of original sin, but of actual, personal sin. This is so true that, as theologians have observed, whenever our Blessed Saviour speaks of sensible sufferings to be inflicted on the guilty, He invariably refers to actual, personal sins as their cause. Thus He takes occasion of the sin of scandal to threaten eternal fire to those who commit it. And in the description of the Last Judgment, as the Evangelist St. Matthew relates, Christ gives as a reason of the sentence, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," the omission and neglect, on the part of sinners, of the works of mercy, though other even more grievous sins are not excluded as deserving said penalty. Now it is evident that unbaptized infants dying before the use of reason cannot be guilty of any sins, either of omission or of commission. Hence no pain of sense is to be endured by them either now or after the last judgment.

415. As to the fact that some few of the Fathers, Church writers, and theologians may be found inclining to the rigid view in the matter at issue, we remark that their private opinion, when opposed to the sentiments of the majority, cannot be held as a sufficient authority to establish a given proposition as a dogma of faith. Between the doctrine of an individual and the official teaching of the Church, based on the common consent of the Fathers, there is the same difference as between the doctrine of man and the teaching of God.

In this connection it is important to recall the teaching of St. Vincent of Lérins in his *Commonitorium,* n. 28, which is substantially as follows:

"We should with great diligence investigate and follow the doctrine of the majority of the ancient holy Fathers, and hold it as the rule of faith. I mean such Fathers as lived, taught, and persevered in the Catholic communion and were conspicuous by

their sanctity, learning, and constancy; who either died piously in Christ, or deserved to be martyred for Christ.

"If, however, some one of the Fathers, though holy and learned, be he a confessor or a martyr, should teach something opposed to the common consent of all the others, that should be reckoned as his own personal and private opinion, contrary to the prevailing public sentiment and belief; for we must not abandon the ancient truth of a dogma universally accepted in order to follow the novel error of a single man, as heretics and schismatics are wont to do." [14]

See Melchior Canus in his classical work *De Locis Theologicis,* where he speaks of the argumentative value of the individual opinions of Fathers and theologians compared to the majority of writers opposed to them.

We must now lay down some principles of Catholic doctrine available for the solution of certain objections raised against God's providence in His dealings with children dying unbaptized. And this will be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER XII

NO HUMAN CREATURE MAY LAY ANY CLAIM TO DESTINATION TO THE SUPERNATURAL STATE

416. We freely confess that, at first sight, it appears very hard to think that children incapable of committing sin should be excluded from the enjoyment of the beatific vision, because their original sin was not blotted out by the regenerating waters of Baptism. Entering, however, more deeply into this question, we discover in all this matter neither injustice nor harshness, but solely the result of an order of things established by God, and of which no one has a right to complain. Eternal felicity, which, according to Catholic faith, consists principally in the intuitive vision of God, is not natural to man or to any other rational creature; that is, no one can lay claim to it as a destiny due to his nature, and much less to any of his meritorious deeds.

It is a supernatural state above and beyond the claims of all creatures, and at which no one can arrive but through supernatural aids, for the means must be proportioned to the end to be attained. In the Christian dispensation, under the law of grace, such supernatural means is Baptism, appointed by the world's Redeemer, to whom belonged the right to determine the way and manner by which His merits were to be applied to men for the attainment of their supernatural destiny or end. It is plain, then, that God, without being harsh or unjust, might

[14] See Enchiridion Patristicum, p. 768.

not have raised any of His creatures, angels or men, to the supernatural state, the beatific vision; but He could have established rewards of a purely natural order, either for this life or the next. Hence it follows that the privation of the beatific vision in a certain number of creatures does not argue injustice or harshness in God's decrees. As the beatific vision is a purely gratuitous gift, no one is wronged because he does not receive it. Neither are some creatures wronged because others receive it, for no one has a right to the beatific vision, and where no right is infringed, no wrong is done. As we shall soon see at greater length, such infants shall be united to God by the participation of natural gifts, and thus rejoice in Him by their natural knowledge and love of their Creator. Their condition then may be compared to that of any intelligent, rational creature, that might have been destined only to a natural end. Father Lessius, in his work, *De Summo Bono,* sums up this highly reasonable doctrine of St. Thomas and other Catholic writers on this question in the following terms:

"If Divine Providence will so deal with the unbaptized children that they will feel no sadness for the loss of the heavenly kingdom, because they will know that, without any fault of theirs, they were simply not fitted for it, why may we not suppose that, in their state, they may, through their natural gifts, be moved to love and praise God for all eternity? In fact, what else could they do, all other occupations having ceased?"[1]

Such infants, therefore, not having been raised to the state of supernatural grace through Baptism, and dying before the use of reason in original sin, have no elicit appetite for the life of supernatural glory. This is, of course, a great loss when compared to the future state of the glorified. But it does not imply any suffering whatever, either of soul or body. As St. Bernard writes: "Nothing burns in hell except one's rebellious will." Hence, this condition is consistent with the enjoyment of natural beatitude, and with a natural knowledge and love of God. St. Thomas says of them: "They are united with God by the participation of natural gifts; hence they will rejoice in Him through their natural knowledge and love."[2]

417. Catholic writers hold that this principle may be extended to the case of adults, especially in heathen nations, who die with their moral and intellectual faculties so imperfectly developed that, as far as responsibility is concerned, they may be regarded as children. Hence we cannot but condemn in the strongest language the cruel doctrine of Calvin, who speaks "of the fiery torments of unchristened infants because such is the inscrutable decree of God's will."[3]

[1] Lib. i, c. 9. [2] In 2 Sent., Dist. 33, q. 2. [3] Inst. Lib. iii, c. 23, sect. 7.

CHAPTER XIII

CONDITION OF UNBAPTIZED INFANTS AFTER THE FINAL RESURRECTION

418. Here it may be pertinently asked: Shall, then, those infants enjoy some kind of natural happiness?

We answer affirmatively, for the following reasons:

In the first place, the unbaptized children in question, though infected with the stain of original sin, are not deprived of their natural gifts; hence they retain both a capacity and a disposition to the enjoyment of what we may rightly call a natural happiness and contentment, and nothing can be urged as an obstacle against it from Christian tradition. Secondly, if we adopt the opinion of St. Thomas that these infants will experience no sadness whatever, it will be easier to maintain that they are certainly capable of possessing some kind of natural felicity. Thirdly, such an opinion is held and defended by the majority of the Fathers, and the all but unanimous consent of Catholic theologians under the leadership of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas.

We may now relate here some views and conjectures of the theologians regarding the condition of unbaptized infants after the general resurrection and the probable place of their abode after the last judgment.

As the Catholic Church has, thus far, issued no dogmatic definition on the points mentioned above and similar other inquiries, a certain liberty of discussion is allowed to investigators, and to the expression of their views, so long as they do not conflict with revealed truth and the traditional teachings of the Church.

419. As has been shown above, Catholic theologians with scarcely any exception hold that unbaptized children, being free from all actual, personal sins, will not be condemned to hell's fire or to any other sensitive pain, and will, moreover, be free from sadness, grief, and all other sufferings.[1] But what will be their condition and mode of existence after the Last Judgment? The eminent theologian, Fr. Francis Suarez of the Society of Jesus, in his commentary on the Summa of St. Thomas and on other works of the same holy Doctor, expresses the following views, which we fully endorse and submit to our readers: They also will partake of the gift of the final resurrection through the merits of Christ, and come under the general law laid down by St. Paul: As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.[2] Christ will be the exemplar or pattern of their resurrection as to their natural endowments and

[1] See St. Thomas, De Malo, q. v, art. 2, 3. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

perfections; a fact which fully accounts for the remarkable qualities of their risen bodies. They will consequently rise with a body naturally perfect as to its size, stature, form, strength, vigor, and general health; though, of course, destitute of such supernatural qualities as are exclusively proper to the glorified bodies of the elect. According to St. Paul's teachings,[3] they will rise of the age of Christ in ripe manhood, and thus attain their natural perfection, which is then at its best; and will therefore be able to exercise their mental faculties, memory, intellect, and will, without any hindrance from bodily imperfections, which are done away with.

Their bodies will be immortal, and therefore incorruptible, not intrinsically, as the glorious bodies of the just, but through an extrinsic special providence, which will remove the present causes of sickness, injuries, and death.

They will no longer feel the need of nourishment, which is intended to supply the waste of the body, for a flesh that has put on incorruption will no longer suffer any waste. Hence their vital vigor and strength will remain undiminished and unimpaired.

Though their mode of locomotion will be as at present, yet their bodily organism will be entirely subject to the will and the empire of the soul, and suffer no fatigue.

420. Here it may be asked: How can natural beatitude, assigned to unbaptized infants, be reconciled with the doctrine of the Church excluding them from the happiness and bliss of the beatific vision?

We answer that these two things must be carefully distinguished. It is one thing for an individual to attain that in which perfect beatitude consists and quite another thing for him to possess that which in itself, though neither perfect nor supernatural, yet makes him simply blessed, happy, and contented.

If, then, we bear in mind the distinction between the supernatural destiny attained by the elect and the natural happiness attributed to the unbaptized, all difficulties will disappear and the dogmatic teaching of the Catholic Church regarding those two classes of human creatures will be perfectly harmonized.

The sensitive faculties being entirely controlled by the spiritual, the risen creatures we speak of will experience no rebellion of the flesh against the spirit, and on that account will also be impeccable; for the period of probation, implying the possibility of sin, is limited to the present duration of human life. We may also apply to them what Christ said of the elect. "In the resurrection they shall neither marry, nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven."[4]

To the question whether the unbaptized infants will appear at the last judgment, St. Thomas answers affirmatively and says

[3] Eph. iv. 13.

[4] Matt. xxii. 30.

that they will be present in order to see the glory of Jesus Christ, the Supreme Judge; and they will then understand that all the gifts they possess, even in the natural order, are due to His merits. They will, moreover, be fully convinced that their condition is perfectly conformable to right and justice. They will recognize and confess Christ's divinity, not owing to divine faith or supernatural revelation, but as displayed and manifested by His power and omnipotence in the general resurrection; and by His omniscience of the conscience of all men, on whom He will pronounce the final sentence either of salvation or of damnation. Hence, knowing that they are indebted to Christ for the gifts of their natural state, they will, no doubt, be moved to tender to Him acts of gratitude and love.

What about the place of their abode? Where shall it be? Learned theologians, says Suarez, piously think that our own earth, renewed and embellished, after the destructive fire of the last day, will constitute their permanent dwelling-place.[5]

In conclusion, we may say that though the unbaptized children may not be called blessed, and are truly said to be in a state of reprobation, yet they will be fully contented with their natural happiness, and enjoy a felicity far superior to anything man may now possess on earth. These conditions will doubtless console the parents who were bereaved of children that died without Baptism. But on the other hand, reflecting on the doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding the immense happiness held out to the baptized, parents will realize their imperative duty of securing to their offspring the paramount blessing of Holy Baptism.

As to converts to our faith, they will, no doubt, admire the wisdom of the Catholic Church in securing to them the validity of that sacrament through the provision of conditional Baptism whenever there is sufficient ground to fear that their former Baptism may not have been validly administered, particularly for want of right intention on the part of the minister conferring the rite.

421. As Fr. Thurston, S.J., wisely remarks (*The Month*, Feb., 1917), we have no warrant for supposing that the natural paradise which is assigned by theologians as the final destiny of unbaptized infants, should be exclusively confined to those who were taken out of this world in their childhood. Obviously the position of the weak-minded and mentally defective, who have never been fully responsible for their actions, even if adult, is precisely identical with that of the infants. As to other adults of barbarous countries, who may have had a very imperfect knowledge of the natural law, the same writer says: "There is no dogmatic pronouncement of authority, no word of Scripture, no teaching of the Fathers, which, in my judgment, speaks so

[5] See Is. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22; Apoc. xxi. 1; 2 Peter iii. 13.

plainly as to exclude the possibility that those unbaptized adults, who, on the one hand, have not not risen to the height of the baptism of desire, and, on the other hand, have not grossly outraged the unwritten law of conscience, may share the natural happiness or paradise of unbaptized infants."

The same author, referring to the general possibility of salvation within the reach of those who have never heard of the Gospel of Christ, writes: "We also know that the savage, however barbarous, who responds to that dim knowledge of God which he derives from the spectacle of God's creation, and who elicits in his heart an act of true love for the Creator, is thereby justified and vested in the robe of supernatural grace as efficaciously as if it had been conferred by the waters of Baptism, though they may have to make expiation for the heedlessness with which they have broken the law but imperfectly known to them."

422. In the course of my investigations relative to the present subject I came across an item of information both interesting and instructive. Among the *schemata* or program prepared by the Commission de Fide for discussion at the Vatican Council in the year 1870, the following was recorded: "Future State of Children that die unbaptized. Proposition: The only punishment assigned to original sin is the loss or privation of the beatific vision." Then follows the prepared definition, Canon V: "They that die stained only with original sin, shall be forever deprived of the beatific vision; but those that die contaminated with grievous personal sins, shall moreover be condemned to the torments of hell."

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

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PART VI

THE PUNITIVE SANCTION

CHAPTER I

HOW ARE DIVINELY REVEALED TRUTHS DEMONSTRATED?

423. As we noted on several occasions, the dogma of future retribution, like every other article of faith, can be apodictically demonstrated only by the testimony of authority derived from Holy Scripture, the Jewish and Christian traditions, and the dogmatic definition of the Catholic Church. It is not intended by this statement to exclude entirely all arguments from reason, for they are rightly adduced by apologists as confirmatory of revealed truth. They furnish what may be called an indirect proof, inasmuch as they show that reason, when properly consulted, can raise no valid argument against the teachings of divine revelation.

Owing, then, to the fact that the proof of an endless future life, either of happiness or of woe, rests on the testimony of authority, before we enter into our argumentation, it is absolutely necessary to dispose of a sophism by which the so-called scientific rationalists of our times strive to refute our thesis as utterly incapable of sound, logical demonstration. They will say, "We refuse to acknowledge the truths of Christian faith because the evidence alleged in their support is insufficient, and therefore incapable of bringing conviction to any prudent, practical man. This," they say, "is our justification for refusing assent to your Christian Creed. We trust the discoveries of science; true, but this is quite another thing. Science offers clear, visible, palpable demonstrations, which are not forthcoming in the case of your dogmas. We contend," they add, "that the only objects with which the human mind is capable of dealing, are those that are naturally intelligible, that is, accessible to experience. The invisible is not our domain. Hence all arguments incapable of being submitted to the experimental test, with which science proves its phenomena and laws, are altogether insufficient and as such cannot commend themselves to any intelligent, fair-minded, impartial being."

Here is our answer: Our adversaries, by asserting that no

truth can be admitted which has no ocular or experimental proof to support it, take for granted that no evidence is of any value which is not intrinsic and capable of experimental demonstration. As all logicians avow, this assertion is absolutely false, and, if once admitted, it cannot but lead to endless absurdities. We may reach truth by two perfectly distinct methods, namely, by actual experimental investigation, when the matter in question is capable of it, or by the testimony of external authority. The second method, of course, is essentially different from the first, though it is not on that account less reliable. The world of spirits, and the world of matter are entirely distinct; therefore the method suitable to material things will be found quite unsuitable to things spiritual. Thus the telescope will reveal the secrets of the heavens, but it will not help us to reveal the secrets of the heart. The microscope will lay bare the innermost structure and texture of plants, but it can throw no light on the mysteries of psychology, because of the essential distinction between the material and the spiritual. Physical instruments and experiments can deal with the former, but all their attempts will be baffled in trying to unveil the mysteries of the latter.

424. Hence the principle of authority, admitted by all sound philosophers, is a perfectly reliable criterion of truth.

This is so true that for our knowledge of history, literature, biography, geography, and of many data of natural sciences, such as physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, etc., we rely entirely upon authority. To exclude all the truths which we are unable to verify by experiments or ocular demonstration, would be to rob us of ninety-nine hundredths of all the knowledge we can possess. We are safe from such consequences, because men are more logical than they profess to be; and because even those who are loudest in denouncing the truths of faith, which cannot be experimentally proved, are compelled to stultify their own teaching and to eat their own words by being forced to exercise faith at every turn.

Our only need in evidence of this kind is to satisfy ourselves that the special authority to which we appeal on any given matter is reliable, and therefore trustworthy. When this is once shown, the truth proposed can be held to be as certain as any truth demonstrated by direct evidence, personal experience or by experimental tests. That such a reliable authority exists in support of the truths of the Gospel will soon be proved. In accordance with the principles laid down above, it is plain that religious truths, the dogmas of faith, do not admit of being proved by any argument except that of authority; and the same must be said of any historical fact. Thus it is intrinsically impossible to prove by mechanical, experimental processes, or by personal observation the power of sacramental absolution,

the spiritual effects of Baptism, the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and the real character of eternal retribution.

425. In fact, no revealed supernatural doctrine is capable of being verified by any natural means whatsoever placed within our reach. It must then be evident to the meanest capacity that if truths of the supernatural order are to be known at all, this can be done only on grounds wholly different from those resorted to for our knowledge of purely natural objects. This being the fact, it is evidently unreasonable to require as a necessary condition of our belief and acceptance that supernatural doctrines should be demonstrated in the same manner as the truths of science. Therefore, to reject a revealed dogma because it cannot be submitted to a purely natural, experimental test is utterly ridiculous. Truth, if it come to us at all, must in every case come in a manner conformable to its nature.

Hence all our senses put together, all experimental science will be utterly unable to give us any inkling of the invisible, supernatural world, of the doctrine of future retribution, and of the conditions of meriting eternal life and of other revealed truths. (See n. **311.**)

426. We Catholics have no more doubt about the truth of any article of divine Catholic faith than we have of the theorems of Euclid; for though the motive compelling assent is entirely different and distinct in the two orders of truth, yet the strength of the motive in the first case is at least equal to that which imposes assent in the second. Thus, to illustrate this statement by other examples, the faithful believer is as certain of the truth of the Catholic doctrine on the mystery of the Holy Trinity or the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist as he is of the self-evident truisms that two and two make four, the whole is greater than any of its parts, etc.

As soon as an authority has been shown to be trustworthy and reliable, as soon as it has been proved that a given witness possesses both knowledge and veracity, the only reasonable thing man can do is to trust it and accept its teaching.[1]

CHAPTER II

PERFECT RELIABILITY OF THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

Here we ask: Does any sufficient and reliable authority exist in behalf of Christ's Gospel and the Christian religion which He founded? This is the very keystone of the arch. The

[1] See Faith and Folly, ch. 2, 2d edition.

whole case for Christianity turns upon this cardinal point, and must stand or fall with it.

427. How easy it is for the Catholic apologist to demonstrate the absolute trustworthiness of the authority of Jesus Christ will appear from the following array of arguments which Divine Providence places at our disposal.

1. The stainlessness of His character.
2. The sublimity of His doctrines.
3. The unrivaled beauty of His moral precepts.
4. The incomparable holiness of His life.
5. The numerous miracles He wrought.
6. The fulfilment of the prophecies He made.
7. His own triumphant Resurrection and Ascension.
8. The astounding influence of His name throughout the past generations and down to the present day.
9. The wonderful spread of His teachings so opposed to men's corrupt nature and so mysterious and humiliating to their pride and limited intellect.
10. The innumerable martyrs who died for His sake and sealed with their blood the truth of His Gospel.
11. The history of the Church He founded, teeming with numberless evidences of divine sanction and heavenly protection.
12. The unbroken succession of His Vicars from St. Peter to the reigning Pontiff Benedict XV.
13. The prodigious propagation of the Christian religion He founded amidst apparently insuperable obstacles.
14. Its unshaken stability and endurance in spite of the fiercest and unceasing persecutions that have assailed it.
15. The testimony of the countless millions that believed and professed the doctrine of Christ—a multitude including the wisest and purest individuals that ever lived.
16. The beatified and canonized saints, of whom the Bollandist collection alone reckons twenty-five thousand, who sanctified themselves by the perfect imitation of the examples of Christ.
17. Add to these the countless number, of holy people, whose names are known to the omniscient God alone, and whose glory, now hidden, will be revealed to mankind at the last judgment.[1]

428. These several arguments, fully developed in countless learned works, which fill the libraries of civilized countries in both hemispheres, furnish an overwhelming evidence of the perfect reliability of the authority of Jesus Christ, on which the truth of Christianity and all its teachings rests. No reasonable man will demand more. Neither is more required to demonstrate the paramount, cardinal truth that Christ was more than a man, that He was and is the eternal Son of the living God. Whence it follows that His mission is divine, His Gospel

[1] Wis. v. 1–5.

is divine, and that consequently all His promises, as well as all His threats, are true.

429. Christ showed what He was by what He did. He reversed and suspended at pleasure the laws of the material world, which He Himself had devised and established. The diseased grew well under His touch; the lepers were made clean and the feeble strong. He had but to speak a word and the blind saw, the deaf heard, and the dumb spoke. Even the dead obeyed His voice and rose from the tomb; and Lazarus, though fallen to corruption, sprang to vigorous life at His bidding. The tempests were instantly stilled at His command, and the wind and the sea were subject to the empire of His will. He walked on the waves, changed water into wine, and fed more than five thousand people in the desert with the seven multiplied loaves. Hence Our Saviour's convert, Nicodemus, thus addressed Him: "Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God, for no man can do these signs, which Thou dost, unless God be with Him." [2]

Though any one of the preceding topics, taken singly, would be enough to satisfy any fair-minded man, their collective, cumulative force is absolutely irresistible. As the Royal Psalmist says: "Thy testimonies, O Lord, are become exceedingly credible." [3]

Hence all staunch believers will fully endorse the following remarkable sentiment of Richard of St. Victor:

"May we not with all confidence say to God, 'O Lord, if we are in error, we have been deceived by Thyself; for our faith has been confirmed with miracles and prodigies so great that they could be performed by Thyself alone.'" [4]

CHAPTER III

WHY IS THERE A PUNITIVE SANCTION OF GOD'S LAWS, AND BY WHOM IS IT REJECTED?

430. In every well-organized civil society, be it a republic, a monarchy, or a constitutional state, ample provision is made for the maintenance of public order and the well-being and protection of its citizens. The lawbreakers are arrested by public officers, and brought to the courts of justice to be dealt with according to the gravity of their crimes. In most of these governments there exist two principal deterrents from evil-doing, viz., the death penalty and imprisonment for life. They are intended as a just punishment for the most enormous offenses against the law, such as murder and high treason. Criminals are also justly

[2] John iii. 2. [3] Ps. xcii. 5. [4] De Trinitate Lib. 1, c. 11.

removed from society for the protection of law-abiding citizens, to whose security the presence of evil-doers is a continual menace.

431. A similar, though far more terrible, provision is to be found in God's government of mankind. Sinners are removed from the society of their fellow-men, and thus incapacitated from doing further evil, by death, which, severing the union between soul and body, brings the former to judgment and flings the latter into the grave.

God also has His prison, the dungeon of hell, to which are condemned the souls of the wicked. It is the life term imprisonment reserved by divine justice to impenitent souls. We learn from the soul's immortality how long this imprisonment is to last; forever, for the endless ages of the eternal years. We see how imperfect, how insignificant are the provisions of human justice compared with those of the divine. It is a fearful thing, as St. Paul warns us, "to fall into the hands of the living God."[1]

432. The justice and necessity of a place of punishment in the world to come may be further demonstrated by arguing from what men exact from the civil authorities in the case of offenders against the State laws.

Let us suppose that a man is found guilty of high treason or of some other abominable crime which makes him amenable to the penalty of death. But the king or chief ruler of the nation, wishing to exercise his right of clemency, pardons that criminal. What would happen in the commonwealth, if the same outrageous crimes were to be repeated several times by the ungrateful wretch and as many times forgiven by the monarch? What would be the attitude of the people in such an event? They would demand the immediate infliction of the extreme penalty prescribed by the law on that incorrigible traitor. In their eyes any further exhibition of clemency would be a travesty of justice, imperiling the well-being of the State and affording encouragement to evil-doers. The application of this to the transgressors of God's commandments is easy enough. What if they repeatedly break the divine law, insult and defy the majesty of the Lord, of whose universal governing power all earthly kings are but shadows? Shall there be no punishment for such criminals? Obstinately persevering in sin, they outrage God's patient, long-suffering mercy by refusing to submit to the easy and most reasonable condition on which full pardon would be granted. Yet they deliberately choose to die in open rebellion against their Maker, preferring to remain His perpetual enemies, forever separated from Him. Now, this is hell, for the eternal loss of God alone, independently of other penalties, is the greatest punishment which the Omnipotent Judge of mankind could inflict. For any human being that should treat Almighty God as the reckless

[1] Heb. x. 31.

sinner described above, the mystery should be not that there is a hell, but that there were no hell to punish him as he deserves.

433. In this our mortal life there is nothing that strikes greater terror into the mind and heart of the wicked, and is more powerful in restraining men from sin than the fear of that punishment, which the Lord, the Supreme Judge, has threatened to inflict on the transgressors of His holy laws. Though virtue shows itself amiable and attractive by its natural beauty and grace, yet, as experience teaches, the majority of men are more deeply impressed by motives of fear than by those of love. In other words, the dread of punishment influences men's moral conduct more powerfully than the hope of reward.

St. John Chrysostom, in his Fifth Homily on St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, says that there is no turpitude, however degrading, no crime, however monstrous, into which men would not plunge if they could only persuade themselves that no account is to be rendered of their evil deeds, and that consequently no chastisement is to be feared. Should such condition prevail, all moral order, honesty, virtue, peace, and tranquillity would disappear, and society itself would be transformed into hordes of wild beasts. From these results he rightly concludes that men should be highly grateful to God for having provided so powerful a deterrent from evil-doing as is found in the reality of the punishment that awaits the impenitent sinner in the world to come. Though the recollection of this revealed truth is likely to give the worldlings nervous spasms and drive them to mental convulsions, yet we should not desist from proclaiming a dogma of faith which is intended by God's infinite mercy as a salutary warning to the just and to bring sinners to a timely conversion. Hear the pertinent remark of St. Gregory the Great: "God has established the eternal punishment of hell for this special reason—to deter us from the commission of sin."[2]

Man, whether civilized or barbarian, has an innate sense and love of justice. He feels that an unjust act, though not affecting himself, is a violation of the moral order and an outrage against the infinite majesty of the Creator. What sad spectacles he is often compelled to behold! Never a day dawns and fades that some heart does not break under the weight of accumulated wrongs. Again and again are truth and honesty crushed to earth and, in many cases, they do not rise again, at least here below. Right is often on the scaffold and wrong on the throne. In many a quarter the poor, the innocent, and the helpless are ground under the feet of might and there is no deliverer. Whole generations have gone groaning to the grave, scourged by the iniquity of rulers, and robbed by the rapacity

[2] Lib. iii, Moral.

of irresponsible despots. Here the reader's thoughts naturally revert to the persecutions of Catholics in England, Ireland, and Scotland for nearly three hundred years, and recall the sad fate of unhappy Poland, crushed under the heels of the Russian Czars since the day of its iniquitous partition nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. Where is relief to be found? Only in the belief that this world is not all. If every human life ends at the grave, then there are wrongs that can never be righted, there are outrages that can never be atoned for, sufferings and labors that shall never be rewarded. Without another world, where all accounts are to be evenly balanced, the present one becomes an insoluble riddle and man's life an enigma to vex his mind and torture his heart. If heaven be a dream, and hell a delusion, if no invisible Supreme Judge is to be feared, if no punishment is to overtake the guilty in another world, then the criminals who succeed in evading the hands of human justice will meet with no penalty for their misdeeds. The shrewd embezzler and the cunning peculator, who wasted in high living the fortunes entrusted to their keeping, whose rascalities and robberies are discovered only after their death, will escape all chastisement both here and hereafter. Life beyond the tomb must then be admitted if we are to retain unshaken our faith in the justice of the Supreme Ruler of mankind. If souls survive the dissolution of the grave, the tragedy of human history, it is true, is not removed; but men's hearts are braced to look upon it with an unflinching fortitude, and their hope is sustained by an endurance to be crowned by a happiness that shall have no end. We must not heed the momentary tribulations, nor stagger beneath the load of earthly cares, for all these afflictions are light and trivial in comparison to the joys in store for the just in our heavenly Father's home. "I reckon," writes St. Paul, "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come."[3] Here we may ask: For whom has God especially destined the abode of eternal bliss? Hear St. James: "Hath not God chosen the poor in this world rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him?"[4] (See Part II, Ch. III and IV.)

434. Were we to inquire into the principal cause or motive of the bitter opposition made by unbelievers, apostates, and reckless sinners to this terrific, revealed truth, we would find it in the well-ascertained fact that nothing interferes more with their sinful enjoyments than the remembrance of the judgment to come and of the retribution awaiting all evil-doers in the future world. Long ago, that is, more than fifty years before the Christian era, the Roman bard Lucretius thus wrote in his poem *De Rerum Natura:*

[3] Rom. viii. 18.

[4] James ii. 5.

"That dreadful fear of hell is to be driven out, which thoroughly disturbs the life of man and makes it miserable, overcasting all things with the gloom of death, and leaving no pure, unalloyed pleasure." [5]

This is so true that whenever men resolve to pursue a career of iniquity they ordinarily begin by shaking off what they call the unsupportable yoke of religion and its dogmas, rejecting all belief in a future existence, and ridiculing the idea of hell as a bugbear begotten of ignorance and superstition. The same desperate course is adopted by those who either entertain no fear of God or deny His existence altogether. Hence the Royal Psalmist rightly says: "The fool has said in his heart: There is no God." He then tells us what becomes of such infidels: "They are corrupt and are become abominable in their ways . . . there is no fear of God before their eyes." [6]

435. "Why," says Cardinal Manning, "did the inspired writer say: 'the fool said in his heart,' and not in his head? Is it not the head that does the thinking? The Scripture is perfectly correct, for the denial of God's existence and of other revealed truths is not the result of the conviction of the head, that is, of the mind, but is the outcome of the corruption of the heart." As we read in the Book of Wisdom, King Solomon, its author, left to us a full description of such reckless characters, whom he introduces thus speaking among themselves: "They have said, reasoning among themselves, but not right: The time of our life is short and tedious . . . and no man hath been known to have returned from hell . . . for after this we shall be as if we had not been . . . our body shall be ashes, and our spirit shall be poured abroad as soft air. Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present. . . . Let us crown ourselves with roses, before they be withered; let no meadow escape our riot, for this is our portion and this our lot. . . . These things they thought and were deceived, for their own malice blinded them." [7]

436. What the sacred writer says of the worldlings both at the beginning and toward the end of the quoted chapter shows how utterly false was their conception of life. Lactantius [8] treats of this subject at great length, and by the example of the Epicureans (the worthy predecessors of our modern Bohemians) shows that the denial of future retribution springs invariably from the unrestrained indulgence in the criminal pleasures of the flesh, the baneful source of all other iniquities. Epicurus, says Lactantius, promised full impunity to the pursuit of carnal gratifications, and he himself wallowed in the most abominable carnalities, holding and teaching that such enjoyments constitute the supreme end of man. It is, then, true that among the

[5] Lib. iii, v. 37–40; see also Virgil's Æneid, l. vii, v. 312. [6] Ps. xiii. 1.
[7] Wis. ii. 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 21. [8] Divin. Inst. lib. iii, 3. 17.

chief opponents of future retribution are reckoned godless, immoral individuals, the pests of human society, whose dishonorable lives are a blot on the dignity of man.

Hence what the French writer La Bruyère said of atheists may be rightly applied, with a slight change, to the opponents of future punishment in the next world:

"I would like to see a man who is sober, chaste, honest and upright declare that there is no future retribution to sinners, but such a man cannot be found."[9]

When treating of the sanction of God's holy laws in Part II of our work, we proved that the only efficient, perfect, and complete sanction is that which belongs to future life, and it alone. We have now to state in detail the precise character of the punitive sanction provided by God's wisdom, power, and justice; and revealed by Himself in Holy Scripture. This we shall do in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE PAIN OF LOSS OR THE FORFEITURE OF HEAVENLY HAPPINESS

437. The punitive sanction established by Almighty God, the Supreme Judge of mankind, consists, first, in the exclusion of the wicked from heavenly happiness. This chastisement chiefly consists in the privation of the beatific vision, the "happy-making" sight. It is the irreparable loss of man's highest destiny, and of all the spiritual enjoyments contained in it. It is the irretrievable loss of all the goods possessed by the souls of the just in their celestial abode, God's own kingdom. At the last judgment the rebel angels, the demons, and the wicked human creatures will indeed see the person of Jesus Christ in all the splendor and majesty of His glorified humanity; a sight to them full of terror and consternation; but none of them will ever behold His divinity, a sight exclusively proper to the blessed in heaven. It is from the knowledge of irreparable loss of supreme bliss, the vision of God, that the chief suffering of the reprobates arises; a grief and sorrow so heartrending that, according to St. Augustine, no other punishment endured in hell can be compared to it.

That the reprobates are to incur this awful penalty is a truth distinctly revealed in Holy Writ. A few quotations will suffice. We have in the first place the sentence of Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Judge: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire."[1] "I know you not, whence you are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity."[2] "Know you not," writes St. Paul, "that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God? Do not

[9] Caracteres, Ch. XVI on Freethinkers. [1] Matt. xxv. 41. [2] Luke xiii. 27.

err: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers . . . nor drunkards, nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God."[3] In the Apocalypse we read: "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and unchaste, and murderers, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie."[4]

438. The justice and severity of this chastisement are shown by the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas in several passages of his writings. He thus reasons in his work *Contra Gentiles:* "Natural equity requires that rational creatures should be deprived of the good against which they deliberately act and rebel, as thereby they render themselves unworthy of that good as they wilfully reject it. Whosoever, therefore, sins against his last end, which is everlasting beatitude, attainable by submission to the divine will, is deservedly forever excluded from it."[5]

Then elsewhere he says that the privation of the beatific vision and consequent separation from God is for the reprobates a greater torment than that of hell's fire, and states the reason by contrasting it with the state of the blessed: "Man's perfect future happiness, as to his intellect, consists in the full vision of God; and, as to his will, in the perfect love of Him. Hence the reprobate's extreme misery is caused by his complete privation of the divine sight on the part of his intellect, and his total aversion from divine goodness on the part of his will."[6] The same truth is testified most forcibly by St. John Chrysostom in several parts of his works. In his Twenty-third Homily on St. Matthew's Gospel he writes: "Hell's fire is indeed an intolerable and horrible punishment; yet I believe that hell's torments, multiplied a thousandfold, do not equal the awful penalty of being forever excluded from the glory of heaven." And in his Forty-seventh Homily to the people of Antioch he writes: "The reason why we do not fully understand how great a misery it is to be excluded from heavenly glory is because in the present life we do not realize the magnitude of the happiness of paradise resulting particularly from the clear vision of God and His infinite perfections." What intensifies the grief of the damned is their witnessing from their place of torments till the last judgment the glory and happiness of the blessed. Our Blessed Saviour thus spoke to the obstinate Jews: "You shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."[7] See also the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in the Sixteenth Chapter of St. Luke, verses 19–31. But the most convincing argument of the truth we are asserting is that presented by the sacred writer in the Book of Wisdom: These [the reprobates] seeing it [the just in glory], shall be troubled with terrible fear . . . saying within themselves, . . . : "These are they whom we had some-

[3] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. [4] Apoc. xxii. 15. [5] Lib. iii, c. 144.
[6] Opusc. i, 175. [7] Luke xiii. 28.

time in derision . . . We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth . . . the way of the Lord we have not known."[8] It is difficult to conceive how keen will be the grief and regret of the wicked when they recall the fact that they also had been created for the happiness of heaven; that such happiness had been placed by a most benign Providence within their easy reach and that they irrevocably missed it through their own foolish abuse of freedom. Abuse of human liberty, says St. Bernard, is the only cause of hell's torments, as its legitimate use is the cause of heaven's happiness.

CHAPTER V

THE PAIN OF SENSE—FIRE HELL'S CHIEF TORMENT

In Part II of this work, when treating of the sanction of God's holy laws, we adduced some of the chief reasons why the punitive sanction to be efficacious must also contain sensitive pains. This point having been sufficiently demonstrated, particularly from the authority of St. Thomas,[1] we proceed at once to the discussion of the present chapter.

439. Here we shall not dwell on any specific torments, invented by ill-advised writers and preachers, for which no warrant can be found in the Sacred Records; but we shall limit ourselves to the statement of such pains and afflictions as have been distinctly and clearly revealed by God Himself and are contained in Holy Scripture, from which neither human nor diabolical malice shall ever be able to efface them. The late Canon Farrar, the notorious advocate of a second trial of sinners in the next world, in his "Eternal Hope," expressed his ardent wish that the three harsh and most unwelcome words, "damnation," "hell," and "everlasting," should be erased from the English Bible. But they are still there, as well as in all the million Bibles printed in every language spoken under the sun. Shall rationalists ever attempt to expunge them?

We are now treating of the chief instrument of divine justice for the punishment of sinners, the fire lighted up, as Holy Scripture tells us, by God's own anger. "For Tophet [meaning Gehenna or hell] is prepared from yesterday, prepared by the King, deep and wide. The nourishment thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it."[2] So frequent is its mention in Holy Writ that pages might be filled with its quotations. Only some of the principal and

[8] Wis. v. 2–7. [1] Contra Gentiles, lib. iii, ch. 145. [2] Is. xxx. 33.

clearest passages will here be cited from both Testaments: "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" [3] "Woe be to the nation that riseth up against my people; for the Lord Almighty will take revenge on them. . . . For He will give fire and worms into their flesh, that they may burn and may feel forever." [4]

440. Coming now to the New Testament, we find that the burden of St. John the Baptist's preaching lay chiefly in threatening impenitent sinners with hell's fire in the world to come. "Every tree, therefore, that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire. The Lord will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." [5]

But one of the clearest and most startling utterances of our Divine Redeemer on this dreadful subject is that registered in St. Mark's Gospel, in which three terrific truths are revealed and forcibly expressed, viz.:

1. The existence of future punishment.
2. The presence of fire as one of the chief torments of hell.
3. The eternal duration of both the infernal pains, and of the reprobates condemned to suffer them.

"And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.

"And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting than having two feet to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished.

"And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." [6]

St. Augustine, commenting on this text, writes: "Who is there that will not be terrified by this threefold repetition, the fearful threatening of the severest of all punishments by Christ Himself, the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead?"

441. By the figurative expressions of cutting off the hand and the foot and plucking out the eye, our Divine Master meant to teach us the necessity of removing all occasions of sin, of rooting out the causes that lead to evil-doing, and of shunning all danger of scandal. "If, therefore," He meant to tell us, "you love and value something as much as if it were your hand, foot, or eye, and you should know that such a thing would be to you a cause of evil, you should bravely remove it lest by neglecting it, you should be plunged into the unquenchable fire."

[3] Ibid. Is. xxxiii. 14.
[4] Judith xvi. 20, 21.
[5] Matt. iii. 10, 12.
[6] Mark ix. 42–47.

442. As we read in Matthew xxv. 41, 46, and in Mark ix. 42–47, Christ's own words remain the most terrific that have ever been spoken in the ears of men. And they will retain their force and import, however ingenious may be the attempts to empty them of their meaning. In such a matter as this it is surely a most dangerous procedure for any man to seek refuge in a false security and to allow the impression to take root that by ignoring the unwelcome truth it has ceased to exist for us, or that we have escaped the responsibility which its recognition entails. Our duty is rather to face it bravely, and, God helping us, to seek for a safe and divinely appointed means of escape. Hence the most cultured and enlightened Catholic and Protestant writers have explicitly stated it as their intimate conviction that the doctrine here referred to is a vital and integral part of God's revelation in Holy Scripture, and that the only wise and honest thing for us to do is to acknowledge the stern fact, and for evangelical ministers fearlessly to proclaim it to their flocks.

We find in St. John's Gospel the following words of our Blessed Saviour: "If any one abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth."[7]

St. Paul thus warns his Christian flock, the Thessalonians: "In a flame of fire, giving vengeance to them who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer eternal punishment."[8]

We end our quotations with a testimony from the Apocalypse or Revelation, the last Book of the New Testament: "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."[9]

For the true meaning of the words "second death" see Part VIII. The term "fire," contained in the preceding texts and in many other Scriptural testimonies, is to be understood in its obvious, literal sense, so long as such interpretation is not found conflicting with other passages of God's word, with any explicit doctrinal definition, or with moral principles known to reason. On this account we claim that the word "fire" must be taken in its obvious significance, excluding altogether all metaphorical interpretation. A fuller discussion of this matter is given in Part IX.

443. This is the doctrine of the Catholic Church. As to the outsiders, who, perverting God's plan, have, in expounding Holy Scripture, substituted the fallible tribunal of private judgment for the infallible authority of the Church, we are not surprised at the many novel interpretations of hell's fire, to which they

[7] John xv. 6. [8] 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. [9] Apoc. xxi. 8.

attribute a purely metaphorical meaning. By so doing they simply follow the example of the early Reformers, Calvin in particular, who held that all such expressions as "hell's fire," "burnings," "sulphur," "brimstone," and the like are to be taken figuratively. But shall they, by their denials and free, liberal interpretations, extinguish the flames kindled by the breath of the Lord?[10]

The holy prophet Job thus speaks of the penalty awaiting the wicked man in the next world: "A fire that is not kindled shall devour him. This is the portion of a wicked man from God,[11] —a text thus explained by the renowned Biblical scholar Tirinus, S. J., "A fire not kindled by earthly fuel, but lighted by the power of God, who uses it as the instrument of His justice and maintains its action for the eternal torment of the wicked."[12]

444. As to any official pronouncement from the Catholic Church on this point, we must bear in mind the following important distinction. The fact of the actual presence of fire in hell is one thing; but a definition or explanation of the inner nature of such a fire is quite another. As to the fact itself, we need not look for any dogmatic decision, for it is not needed at all, since such a fact is clearly and explicitly stated in both the Old and New Testament. As to the character or nature of the fire, the thing to be determined is not whether it is a fire resembling any of the different kinds of fire we are acquainted with in this world—a matter which the Church is not likely ever to define—but rather whether it is a real and not a metaphorical fire in the Calvinistic sense.

445. It is highly important to maintain that hell's fire is not a metaphorical or imaginary fire, but a real one; namely, a fire that actually torments the reprobates—the demons and the damned souls before the last judgment, and both the souls and the bodies of the wicked after the general resurrection. So strong are the arguments from Holy Scripture, tradition and the authority of theologians, in favor of this statement, that, as Hurter remarks, it would be rash to assert that the infernal fire is not real but metaphorical. An assertion is said to be rash when ... is opposed to the doctrine commonly taught and received in the Church, though it may not as yet have been defined as an article of faith.

There are many passages both in the Old and the New Testaments referring to real, corporeal, or material fire as the chief penalty of the wicked in hell.[13] Among other Scriptural testimonies must be singled out those to which it is impossible to attribute a metaphorical meaning, as they speak of the properties, characters, and effects exclusively applicable to real fire,

[10] Is. xxx. 33. [11] Job xx. 26, 29. [12] Tirinus in Job xx. 26.

[13] See Passaglia, De Igne Inferno Non Metaphorico, pp. 47–58; and Chatel, De Igne Inferni, pp. 16–19.

such as the fiery furnace into which the chaff—that is, the wicked—are cast;[14] the lake of burning fire and brimstone;[15] and the flame tormenting the damned.[16]

We freely grant that among hell's torments there are some which must be taken figuratively or metaphorically, and this for evident reasons that cannot be applied to the pain of fire. Thus, for instance, in Chapter IX of St. Mark's Gospel, we find mentioned along with the unquenchable fire the undying worm, the worm that dieth not, repeated three times. According to St. Thomas, several Fathers, and the almost unanimous opinion of theologians, the term "worm" is plainly metaphorical, meaning the remorse incessantly pricking the conscience of the reprobates. And this for the obvious reason that it is impossible for a living worm to affect spiritual substances, such as the fallen spirits and the human souls, or even the risen bodies of the reprobates, which will be absolutely incorruptible. (See n. **455.**)

Bible history tells us that on several occasions Almighty God punished sinners in this life by the chastisement of fire. The punishment inflicted on the impure cities of Sodom and Gomorrha was of this type.[17] Fire from heaven consumed the two first captains of fifty men and the fifties that were with them, who had been sent by King Ochozias against the prophet Elias.[18]

Thus we see that even in this life the Lord made use of fire as the instrument of His justice for the punishment of sinners; an instrument eminently fitted for that purpose, as it causes most excruciating pains. If hell's fire were only like the one we are acquainted with in this world, such a torture would be frightful indeed. But let us see how our fire differs from that of hell:

A. The principal efficient cause of our present fire, intended for our use and comfort, is God, as the Author, Ruler, and Governor of nature; and God as Supreme Judge and avenger of sinners is likewise the Author of the fire of hell.

B. The present fire is produced and maintained by natural agents. The breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindles the fire of hell.[19]

C. Our fire can act on our souls only through the medium of the body; the Lord's fire in hell reaches and torments the soul directly and independently of bodily organs.

D. Lastly, the fire of the present world may be diminished and extinguished by men; but the fire of the next world is unquenchable, for it is kept up by the power of God.

Hell's fire, then, is not metaphorical, as Calvin taught; but real, corporeal, and material. Though there exists no explicit, dogmatic definition by the Church on this point, yet this is the common doctrine held by Catholic theologians with scarcely any

[14] Matt. xiii. 42. [15] Apoc. xxi. 8. [16] Luke xvi. 24.
[17] Gen. xix. 24. [18] 4 Kings i. 14. [19] Is. xxx. 33.

exception. It therefore cannot be called in question by any Catholic without rashness. Suarez sums up the general opinion of theologians as follows: "It is a certain and Catholic doctrine that the fire tormenting the rebel angels and the souls of the wicked is truly real and corporeal." [20]

446. As to this last point, we freely grant that there exists as yet no formal, dogmatic definition, though the *Sensus Ecclesiæ* and patristic tradition evidently exclude altogether the metaphorical meaning.

We possess, however, a practical direction from a Roman Congregation regarding the confessors' attitude toward a class of penitents who obstinately cling to a metaphorical meaning of the fire of hell. The case presented to the Sacra Poenitentiaria was as follows: A penitent presents himself to a confessor, and, among other things, declares that, in his opinion, the fire of hell is not real, but metaphorical; in this sense, that the pains of hell, whatever they may be, are said to be fire only figuratively, because, as fire produces the most intense suffering, so to indicate that hell's torments are most atrocious, no other image was more fit to give an idea of hell. Hence the parish priest asks whether it would be right to allow penitents to hold such an opinion, and whether it would be lawful to absolve them.

The same priest further remarks, that it is not a question of an opinion held only by some individuals, but maintained generally by the people of a certain town, where it is said: "Convince children, if you can, that there is fire in hell."

The answer of the Sacred Congregation was as follows: "Such penitents must be diligently instructed, and, if they remain obstinate *(contumaces)*, they cannot be absolved."—Rome, April 30, 1890.[21]

447. What is the teaching of St. Thomas on this question? He treats of it in several parts of his works. We here cite a few of them: Suppl. p.iii, q. 97, art. 1, 5, 6; Contra Gent. l. iv. c. 90; In iv. Sent. dist. 50, q. 2, art. 3.

The same Angelic Doctor after quoting from St. Augustine, who says "that Gehenna will be a real fire, which will torment the bodie of the reprobates," says that "the bodies of the damned after the resurrection, will be afflicted by a corporeal fire, which will burn but not consume them." And he, moreover, states that both the fallen angels, the demons, and the damned souls are punished by a bodily fire, acting as an instrument of divine justice. It is needless to allege the opinion of the theologians of the subsequent ages, for, with very few exceptions, they all hold and teach the common doctrine that hell's

[20] De Angelis, l. viii, c. 12.

[21] See Buceroni's Enchiridion, p. 35; Ojetti's Synopsis, Third Edition, vol. ii. p. 2341.

fire is not something metaphorical or symbolical, but a real and corporeal agent.

Father Rickaby remarks in his comment on *Contra Gentiles*, page 317, note: "If, then, the saying holds that in the things wherein a man has sinned in the same shall he be punished, fire, a most painful instrument of pain, forms not an unfit punishment for one who has abused the good things of our present existence to offend his Creator and Supreme Benefactor." [22]

The fallen spirits, the demons, and the reprobate souls are tormented by the fire of hell. That the rebel angels are actually tormented by the fire of hell, even when allowed by divine permission to roam over the earth till the universal judgment, is a terrible truth, clearly revealed in Holy Writ, as is plain from the words of the Supreme Judge, reproduced in St. Matthew's Gospel: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." [23] It is plain that such a fire could not be designated as a punishment, if it were impossible for the reprobate spirits to suffer any such pain.

As to the fact that the souls of the lost are actually enduring the pains of hell fire, we are assured of it by the sentence of the Supreme Judge against them: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."

Hence St. Gregory the Great writes: "One and the same pain, fire, afflicts the demons and the reprobate souls, since they have both sinned." [24]

Our Saviour's parable of the rich man and Lazarus points out the same terrific truth. The rich man, who had been buried in hell, lifting up his eyes, when he was in pains, cried out and said: "I am tormented in this flame." [25]

In the present state of union, though it is the soul that experiences the sensation of pain, yet it is so affected through the organs of the body, which act as a medium bringing the soul in contact with external objects, thus producing the sensation of pain. Now God's power can certainly supply the absence of the body and act on the soul without the concurrence of organic mediums.[26]

448. The solution of a common difficulty encountered here will fully clear this matter. All the sensations, it is argued, experienced by the soul in the present life, are caused through the medium of the organs of the body. Now, how can the soul, separated from the body by death, experience such sensations as are caused by hell's fire?

We answer with St. Thomas, that hell's fire, as an instrument

[22] Patuzzi, oper. cit. pp. 191–199. [23] Matt. xxv. 41. [24] Moral. l. i, n. 14.
[25] Luke xvi. 24. [26] St. Thomas, Supplem. p. iii, q. 70, art. 3.

of divine justice, can certainly act on pure spirits without the need of bodily organisms, for Almighty God can doubtless act independently of any medium.

Though the demons by divine permission are allowed to roam through the earth till the day of the last judgment, yet they are not exempted in those intervals from the pains inflicted upon them from the moment of their rebellion to their Maker, which they have to suffer for all eternity.

As to the lost souls, we cannot suppose that they are in a better condition than the rebel spirits; hence, if by God's permission they should ever be allowed to come out of hell for some definite period of time, they must carry along with them the torments endured in the infernal regions. But see Luke xvi. 26.

As the voluptuous make the sense of feeling the principal instrument or means of their sinful delights, Divine Justice has therefore most wisely ordained to punish in hell their sensibility by fire, which, even among men, is reckoned as the most excruciating torment, styled *ultimum tormentorum,* that is, the most painful of all torments. This is done in accordance with the vindicative law laid down by God Himself in Holy Writ: "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented." [27]

St. John, representing the sensualist under the image of the unclean Babylon, says of her: "As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her." [28]

449. We must not suppose that our fire, which the Creator has given us for our utility and comfort, can be compared with the dreadful fire of hell, which He has lit up for the punishment of His enemies. Hence the rich glutton did not simply complain that he was tormented in fire, but that he was tortured in such a fire as that of hell—"*Crucior in hac flamma.*"—"I am tormented in this flame." [29]

Compared with this dreadful fire, says St. Augustine, the most painful torments of this life are simply trifling and of no account. And the Angelic Doctor declares that the lightest pain caused by hell's fire surpasses in intensity the aggregate sufferings that may be endured in the present life. The author of the "Imitation of Christ" says truly that "One hour of punishment in hell will be more grievous than a hundred years of the most austere penance here." [30]

As to the supernatural power of hell's fire, we may say that if the fire of hell is so terrible on account of its natural intensity, it is far more so because it is employed by the Almighty as the instrument of Divine Justice in punishing obdurate sin-

[27] Wis. xi. 17. [28] Apoc. xviii. 7. [29] Luke xvi. 24. [30] Book i, ch. 24, n. 4.

ners. "A fire is kindled in My rage, saith the Lord, it shall burn upon you." [31]

Hence its power must not be judged according to its own natural activity, but according to the omnipotence of its divine Author, who imparts to it a force and violence proportioned to the end He has in view. And what is His end? It is to avenge the insults offered to His sovereign majesty, whose merciful advances were indignantly repelled even to the bitter end. The fire of hell, then, is ordained and meant to attest in a public manner God's infinite hatred for sin, and to proclaim the fact that the Supreme Judge cannot be outraged with impunity. Moreover, that fire is directed by Divine Wisdom and Justice to torment with greater vehemence the faculties and senses of the reprobates, which were more abused for the purpose of sin.

Therefore each of the damned, says the prophet, will suffer in his own fire, that is, in the fire which he has kindled for himself by his evil deeds. "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, encompassed with flames, walk in the light of your fire and in the flames which you have kindled" [32]—a prophetic thought thus developed by St. Jerome in its interpretation: "The fire, which punishes the sinner in hell, is fed by the iniquities he committed on earth, which are, as it were, its fuel, as they were the cause of his reprobation." [33]

450. It cannot be accidental—that is, without a purpose—that Holy Scripture contains far more warnings of hell than promises of heaven. He who searches the hearts and reins knows full well what truth is best calculated to stay and direct the weak and frail mind of man. It has been said—we think with truth—that fear of hell has saved more souls than meditation on heaven. Although fear is not the highest incentive to virtue, it is nevertheless the most powerful in the critical moments of life, and in the intoxicating allurements of certain temptations, to restrain the human will from wrong, and impel it to good. Moved, no doubt, by such consideration, St. Ignatius in his "Spiritual Exercises" remarks that in the meditation on hell we should entreat the Lord to grant us an interior perception and vivid realization of the pains which the lost suffer in order that, if we should fail to be moved to virtue by the love of God, the fear of punishment, at least, may deter us from falling into sin.

CHAPTER VI

ADDITIONAL INFERNAL PAINS ACCORDING TO HOLY WRIT

Fire, as we have seen, is indeed the chief torment of hell; but alas! it is not the only one. In fact, Holy Scripture assures us

[31] Jer. xv. 14. [32] Is. l. 11. [33] In Isaiam loc. cit.

that the reprobates will also be subject to the following bitter afflictions and privations. The reason for these additional pains is thus expressed by St. Thomas: "As the damned in many and various ways offended the Lord, so it is just that their sufferings also should be manifold."[1]

"He [the wicked man] shall burn, and every pain shall fall upon him."[2]

A. THE TORMENT OF INFERNAL DARKNESS

451. I open the Gospel and there I read the sentence pronounced by the king against the guest who ventured to appear at the royal banquet without the wedding-garment: "Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet and cast him into the exterior darkness."[3] The darkness is called "exterior," for the reprobates will forever be deprived of the resplendent light found in heaven, the abode of the eternal King.

In the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Wisdom we read that Almighty God, to punish the obstinacy of King Pharao and his people, covered their land with the most intense darkness, which made them terribly afraid and troubled, filling them with the dread of monsters. "Stretch out, said the Lord to Moses, thy hand toward heaven, and may there be darkness upon the land of Egypt, as thick that it may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven and there came horrible darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days."[4]

That such chastisement was intended to represent a similar affliction in hell we are assured by the writer of the Book of Wisdom, quoted above, who concludes the description of the Egyptian darkness by the following significant words: "Over them only was spread a heavy night, an image of that darkness, which was to come upon them."[5]

As to the difficulty that hell's fire must, through its light, exclude darkness, it has been forestalled and answered by St. Thomas, who, quoting the authority of Pope St. Gregory, says that the fire tormenting the reprobates in hell will have only enough light to cause them to see what will sadden and afflict them, such as the sight of their companions and accomplices in sin. St. Teresa, writing concerning her experience of the pains of hell, when by a special disposition of God's will she suddenly found herself in hell, speaks as follows: "Though there was no light, yet all that is most frightful and painful to the sight could be seen."[6]

B. THE TORMENT OF HUNGER

452. Following are the words of Christ in His Gospel: "Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger."[7] The same afflic-

[1] Suppl. p. iii, q. 97, art. 1. [2] Job xx. 22. [3] Matt. xxii. 13.
[4] Ex. x. 21, 22. [5] Wis. xvii. 20.
[6] Autobiography, ch. 32, n. 5. [7] Luke vi. 25.

tion has been foretold by the prophet Isaias, who, contrasting the enjoyments of the blessed in heaven with the sufferings of the reprobates in hell, writes: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God: Behold My servants shall eat and you shall be hungry."[8]

St. Gregory of Nyssa, commenting on Psalm lviii. v. 7: "They shall suffer hunger like dogs," applies it to the hunger endured by the damned in hell. To form some idea of the severity of this affliction, let us suppose that we should be deprived of food for a few days. The sting of hunger would tear up our very bowels and cause unheard-of pains; and, if no timely relief is afforded, we should soon die amidst awful tortures. Dante's heartbreaking description of the death from hunger of Count Ugolino, his two sons, and two grandsons in the Tower of Pisa, called since the Tower of Famine, makes us shudder in reading it.[9] What must then be the torment of hunger to be endured in hell for all eternity!

C. THE TORMENT OF THIRST

453. That the reprobates will also suffer this torment we are assured by Holy Scripture in both Testaments. The prophet Job, describing the several miseries and afflictions that will overtake the impious man, says: "And thirst shall burn against him,"[10] which sentence commentators interpret as indicating the rabid thirst endured by the wicked in hell. The prophet Isaias, contrasting the delights of the blessed with the privations of the lost, writes: "Thus saith the Lord God; behold My servants shall drink, and you shall be thirsty."[11]

As to the New Testament, we need only refer to Our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus. As the evangelist tells us: "The rich man died and was buried in hell. And he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his fingers in water, to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."[12] His asking the drop of water shows how intense must have been the thirst he suffered. Such will be one of the punishments of the gluttons and the drunkards, of whom St. Paul thus speaks in his Epistle to the Philippians. "They are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly."[13]

D. WEEPING IN HELL

454. That this torment also will afflict the wicked in hell we learn from the following sad prediction of our Blessed Redeemer. "The children of the kingdom [the incredulous Jews] shall be cast out into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and

[8] Is. lxxv. 13. [9] Inferno, xxxiii. [10] Job xviii. 9.
[11] Is. lxxv. 13. [12] Luke xvi. 24. [13] Philipp. iii. 18, 19.

gnashing of teeth."[14] "Woe to you that now laugh; for you shall mourn and weep."[15]

What is the chief reason of such unceasing weeping and lamentations on the part of the wicked? It is mainly caused by the recollection of the many means of conversion offered to them by God's mercy, which they wilfully rejected. This will compel them to acknowledge themselves as the victims of their own obstinacy, and weeping they will be forced to exclaim: "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right."[16]

E. THE GNAWING WORM

455. In that striking passage of St. Mark's Gospel,[17] the torment of remorse, there represented by the undying worm, is repeated three times. It is the opinion of several of the Fathers, and the doctrine of the majority of theologians and commentators of Holy Scripture that by this expression is meant the remorse of conscience. The Fathers that have treated this question and interpreted the undying worm as the endless remorse of conscience afflicting the reprobates, are the following: St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Prosper, St. Bernard, Victor of Antioch.[18] St. Augustine cites with approval the explanation of those who say that whilst hell's fire torments the soul, and, after the resurrection, also the body of the reprobates; the worm, that is, the remorse of conscience, constitutes a particular torture of the soul.[19] (See n. 445.)

Such is also the teaching of St. Thomas, who in his *Summa* speaks thus: "By the worm that torments the damned is meant the remorse of conscience; and it is so called because, as the material living worm causes pain by its sting, so does remorse prick, as it were, the reprobate soul."[20]

Even in this life remorse is found at times so insupportable that criminals in a fit of hatred committed most cruel deeds even against themselves. But what is such remorse compared with that which is suffered in hell? In the present life, seduced by the allurements of a carnal world, steeped in wickedness, and deceived by ignorance, men fail to realize the deformity of sin, the fatal results of a death in impenitence; whilst in the future world the sinner will fully understand the turpitude of the divine offense, the honor due to the supreme majesty of the Creator, the greatness of the heavenly goods which he forfeited, and the justice of the eternal punishment which he incurred. The Holy Ghost gives us an insight into these lamen-

[14] Matt. viii. 12.
[15] Luke vi. 25. See also Matt. xxii. 13; xxiv. 51; xxv. 30; Luke xiii. 28.
[16] Ps. cxviii, 137. See St. Thomas, Suppl. p. iii, q. 97, art. 3.
[17] Mark ix. 43–47.
[18] See Patuzzi, l. 11, pp. 132–136, where the words of these writers are stated and commented upon.
[19] De Civit. Dei, c. xxii.
[20] Suppl. p. iii, q. 97, art. 2.

tations and fruitless regrets of the reprobates: "Saying within themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit. . . . We have erred from the way of truth . . . we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction . . . but the way of the Lord we have not known. . . . Such things as these the sinners said in hell." [21]

St. John Chrysostom thus concludes one of his sermons on this subject: "Hell's fire is indeed intolerable; but even if multiplied in intensity it will never equal the heartrending remorse felt by the damned for having, through the abuse of their free will, excluded themselves forever from the presence of God and the company of the blessed, and plunged themselves into the dungeon of hell." [22]

The dreadful catalogue we have made of the pains suffered by the lost proves how true are the words of the holy prophet Job, who, speaking of the short prosperity of the wicked and their downfall, sums up all their sufferings in the infernal prison in this brief sentence: "He shall burn and every sorrow shall fall upon him." [23] St. Bernard was right then, when he defined hell as the place containing all evils and excluding all goods.

St. Thomas teaches that there is no species of suffering to which the damned shall not be subjected in order that their misery may be complete.[24]

F. THE SOUL'S DREADFUL SOLITUDE IN HELL

456. Among the delights enjoyed by men in this world must be reckoned those that are derived from pleasant social intercourse with their fellow creatures, particularly with the learned and the virtuous. In fact, man is made for society, and society itself rightly claims its origin and blessings from God, its Author. Individuals who are deprived of their liberty and of communication with their fellow-citizens in punishment of their crimes feel most keenly their compulsory solitude and condemnation to almost perpetual silence. But can such suffering of the present life be compared with the eternal exclusion of the wicked from the society of the blessed? Or will the company of the reprobates and the demons, the fallen angels, afford to the damned any compensation for the loss of the society of the elect? On the contrary, the lost would prefer an everlasting solitude to their forced and inevitable association with what is worst among men and the rebel spirits.

In this connection we here record the answer of the Angelic Doctor to the question whether, after the general judgment the wicked in hell will still behold the glory of the blessed, as they

[21] Wis. v. 3, 6, 7, 14. [22] Migne, Cursus Script. vol. xiii. p. 1220.
[23] Job. xx. 22.
[24] In IV Sent., dist. 1, qu. 2, art. 3; Suppl. p. iii, q. 97, art. 1.

do now and will, in a most striking manner, witness at the last judgment, as testified in the fifth chapter of the Book of Wisdom. He answers as follows: "After the day of judgment the reprobates will be entirely deprived of the vision of the saints. But this privation, instead of diminishing, will, on the contrary, increase their misery, for two reasons: First, because they will forever retain the remembrance of the glory of the blessed, which they had seen at the judgment and before it. Secondly, because they will see themselves treated as unworthy even of further beholding the happiness enjoyed by their fellow-beings, the saints.[25]

457. No believing Christian can read these and the following pages without being struck with terror at the thought of the mere possibility that hell with all its horrors distinctly proclaimed in Holy Scripture might be his eternal abode. What a transition, what a change for a lost soul in passing from the resplendent, genial light of our planet into the gloom of the infernal dungeon! What a change for the rich glutton of the Gospel from the banquet hall to the endurance of hunger and thirst that awaited him in the dread Gehenna! What an awful passage for all the voluptuous from the scenes of their intoxicating, carnal pleasures to the prison of hell! As Holy Writ warns us, "They shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone." [26]

The fear of God, properly understood, is that which Holy Writ calls the beginning of wisdom. Prophets, apostles, and their Divine Master persistently impress this motive. Among the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, no one spoke more forcibly and eloquently of such fear as a powerful deterrent from sin than the large-hearted and golden-mouthed St. Chrysostom: "If we are always thinking of hell we shall not easily fall into it. For this reason God has threatened punishment, fixing this menace in our soul, that its remembrance may keep us from sin. None of those who have hell before their eyes will fall into it; and none of those who despise hell, and deny its existence, will escape it. Those who condemn divine threats will sooner or later experience their reality. Let us not banish the remembrance of punishment, that we may escape punishment. If Dives had reflected on that fire, he would not have sinned, but because he was unmindful of it, he fell into it. 'The rich man also died, and he was buried in hell.' [27] Let us then keep hell before our eyes. Let us often consider the strict account we are to render at God's tribunal that, by thinking of those things, we may shun vice and choose virtue and may be able to obtain the blessings promised by the Lord to those that love Him, who is the exhaustless source and fountainhead of all goods, temporal and eternal." [28]

[25] Suppl. p. iii, q. 98, art. 9.
[26] Apoc. xxi. 8.
[27] Luke xvi. 22.
[28] Hom. iii, on 2 Thess.

458. To the question, "When does hell's penalty begin?" we thus answer: Abstracting for the present from the case of souls that depart from this world in grace, but are to be cleansed in purgatory, Catholic faith teaches us that human souls, immediately after death receive either the reward of heavenly glory or the punishment of reprobation, according to their merits or demerits. This is the truth proclaimed by the authority of Benedict XII in his Constitution of January 29, 1336: "We define that, in accordance with the common divine ordinance, saintly souls immediately after death will be in heaven with Christ and the society of the angels, there possessing the beatific vision and life eternal. We moreover define that, according to the common divine ordinance, the souls of those that depart from this world in the state of actual, mortal sin, immediately after death descend into hell, to be tormented by the infernal pains." [29] The Council of Florence under Pope Eugenius IV defined the same article of faith.[30]

To this immediate punishment of the wicked are referred these two passages of Sacred Scripture: "They [sinners] spend their days in wealth [the enjoyment of good things] and in a moment they go down to hell." [31] "For it is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways." [32] "God said to him, [the sinner]: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" [33]

This is also the general opinion of the Fathers, whose teaching is thus expressed by St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers in Gaul: "The wicked will, immediately after death, be plunged into the avenging Gehenna." [34]

CHAPTER VII

THE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS STATE OF CERTAIN TYPICAL CHARACTERS

As a timely warning to all of us, I here submit the description of some typical characters of the negative or indifferent school. I refer to a certain class of men and women, unfortunately found in our midst, who spend their lifetime without giving any serious thought to religion and the duties it imposes. They live entirely unconcerned regarding the account to be given to the Lord after death; an ordeal, which, as St. Paul tells us, no mortal being can escape. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." [1]

[29] D. Enchiridion, pp. 216–217. [30] Ibid. p. 236.
[31] Job xxi. 13. [32] Ecclus. xi. 28. [33] Luke xii. 20.
[34] Quoted by Mazzella, De Deo Creante, disp. vi. [1] Heb. ix. 27.

459. A. At the court of Louis XIV of France a lady of this stamp fell grievously ill, and the court chaplain was summoned to prepare her for a Christian death. The zealous priest did all he could to induce her to make her confession, of which he knew from her friends, she stood sorely in need. But she persistently refused to accede to his exhortations. As the chaplain was about to leave the sick-room, the dying woman was heard saying to herself: "God will think twice before condemning to hell a woman of quality like myself." Whether such a plea was recognized at the great final assizes, it is not hard to guess. But what we know for certain, and no one can venture to deny, is that every one will be judged and dealt with according to his works, whether good or evil. Moreover, all are aware that virtue, holiness, God's grace, freedom from mortal sin, and good works are the only passports to heaven.

Unhappily, similar characters are not wanting in our days. For instance, a so-called society lady dies. As we learn from the daily press, in her lifetime she was the leader at all social functions, balls, excursions, and parties, and she will be greatly missed on that account. As to her religious standing, she was so far advanced in scientific culture that Christianity did not appeal to her refined, superior mind and she became a Unitarian. She perhaps thought that her other qualifications might counterbalance her religious deficiencies. She obtained a decree of divorce from her first husband on account of his rustic, uncouth, incompatible temper; and, reckless of the consequences and in defiance of God's law, she soon after married a well-to-do professional gentleman, likewise divorced, who shared with her the theory of complete indifference in matters of religion; hence all danger of quarrels on that critical topic was eliminated and they lived peacefully together, like two civilized pagans, amidst the brightness of the Gospel light shining in their midst. As we learn from the papers, she had been a leader in the smart set, and the winner of trophies at golf. She felt little or no sympathy for the poor, and when appealed to, systematically refused to succor them in their needs, on the plea that, as she thought, almsgiving does more harm than good, and is likely to foster laziness and other vicious habits in the unworthy recipients. She, however, did not fail to show her generosity and compassion in other ways. She was a member—nay, a high officer—in a society for preventing cruelty to animals; and in her last will she bequeathed $20,000 for the erection and upkeep of a hospital for sick cats and dogs. Being a great reader, she subscribed to many journals and magazines, excluding, of course, from her premises all religious literature of any kind. She was proud of her library, which contained elegantly bound, voluminous works of the renowned agnostic and materialistic writers of the day. The husband, being anxious to give to his departed wife some kind of

a religious funeral, in order to save appearances and prevent unpleasant comments from "bigots"—as he called religious people—applied to the Unitarian minister, as he knew that Unitarians can be called Christians only by courtesy. The minister delivered, in the presence of several mourners and friends, a touching eulogy of the deceased society leader, which appeared in the city press of the next day.

To moralize on the incident just described, we say that if such an individual had any belief in future judgment and of her own responsibility to God for her conduct, she would not, most likely, have repeated the aforementioned words of the woman of the court of Louis XIV. The press described the last rites, and concluded by stating that the departed society leader would be greatly missed by the members of the several women's clubs with which she had been associated from her youngest years.

Will there be among my readers any society lady who would care to face God's judgment seat with such dispositions as those described in the above sketch? Let us all recall here the ardent wish expressed by the holy prophet Moses, shortly before his death. Addressing his people, the Israelites, he said: "O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end."[2]

460. B. Unhappily, similar characters are even more frequently found among individuals of the stronger sex. When we think that on the moment of death hangs an eternity either of happiness or of woe, we cannot but pity and lament the more than supine indifference of those who, making no preparation whatever for the dreadful passage from time to eternity, talk glibly of taking their chances when plunging into what they call "the great unknown." What may be the private moral conduct of a man not only destitute of Christian faith, but actually hostile to it, God, who is to judge him, alone knows. When such an individual comes to die, his fellow-citizens are at once fully informed by the local press about his public career. He was a shrewd business man and succeeded in amassing a large fortune, which he left to his widow, as no children were born to them, for they both advocated the fashionable theory of birth-control, a euphemism for race-suicide. Attracted, no doubt, by financial motives and also, perhaps, by the gaudy uniform of the Shriners, the Knights of Pythias, and other masonic fraternities, which were all represented at his pompous funeral, he had joined them all at his early manhood and was held as one of the most efficient members of the craft. He also associated himself with the Bohemian Club, the rendezvous of the leading sports of the city. When the A. P. A. movement was at its height, he also joined in the fray and wrote in their organ a series of articles against

[2] Deut. xxxii. 29.

what he called the enemies of the American Commonwealth, the Irish people, the Catholic Church, and all foreign immigrants. But dark shadows soon obscured the worldly renown of his name. No sooner was his last will probated, which left to his widow the bulk of his large fortune, than unexpected claimants to a share in the rich inheritance arose in the persons of wives number one and number two, whom he had secretly married and then deserted. The fact naturally disconcerted wife number three, who feared lest a large portion of the wealth left to her should be allotted by the judge to the other rival consorts. The doings of the much-married man were aired in the court and naturally gave rise to comments on the moral—or rather immoral—character of the deceased trigamist, who had succeeded in cheating the law by contracting successive unions without the formality of legal divorce, and the expenses annexed thereto.

It is not for us poor mortals to enter into the secret judgments of God; but one thing is sure, that no living man with a spark of Christian faith in his soul would be willing to appear before God's tribunal in the state of the individual described above.

If these lines should fall under the eyes of some reader resembling the successful business man here referred to, let him take heed lest he put off repentance and reform until it is too late. "Watch ye, therefore," says Christ, "because you know not what hour your Lord will come." [3]

CHAPTER VIII

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

These reflections are here suggested with the purpose of arousing sinners from a state of apathy or indifference and helping them to realize the dangerous state of their soul and to bring them to timely repentance.

461. Where are the unnumbered dead? Where are the millions who have crimsoned the battlefields, the trenches, the fortresses, the watery deep, with their blood in the still raging disastrous European war? How very busy death has been, particularly in the last few years! How busy it still is mowing down its countless victims! It may be next to impossible to trace their burial-place or find the ashes of their cremated bodies. But what neither the bullet, saber, bayonet, cannon-ball or fire could destroy, still survives. I mean their immortal souls. That they still live and think and feel, we are as certain as we are of our own existence. But where are they? Are they

[3] Matt. xxiv. 42.

basking in the divine light and splendor of the beatific vision, enjoying a happiness utterly beyond all description? Or are they safe with God, yet still detained in the purgatorial prison to be purified and made worthy of the company of the blessed? Or have they passed from the sufferings of time to those of eternity? Every fairly instructed Catholic knows the only true answer to these three weighty questions, which completely respond to the several destinies that the Supreme Judge will allot to each human creature as it departs from this world and appears before the dread tribunal.

1. Souls adorned with sanctifying grace, free from all debt of temporal penalty, are at once welcomed by the Redeemer of the world with the cheering words: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."[1]

2. The souls unstained by any grievous offense but yet in need of purification in penance for sins not fully atoned for in the present life, are truly in a state of salvation, and they will sooner or later join the multitude of the elect.

3. But alas! How utterly lamentable is the present condition of such human souls as are poisoned and defiled by the canker of sin, and depart from this life unrepentant and unshriven! They cannot be reckoned amongst God's friends, for they rejected His many offers for reconciliation even to their last dying breath. They have signed their own doom and freely, deliberately chosen rather to abide with Satan and the reprobates in hell, than to dwell with Christ and the blessed in the heavenly paradise. We have reason to believe that countless thousands of sinners were saved by the heroic zeal of the numerous military chaplains, assisted by most devoted Catholic and non-Catholic women, angels of mercy, ministering to the dying and wounded soldiers on the battlefield or in the hospital wards. But alas! How many officers and soldiers now counted among the dead must have rejected the priestly ministrations, and earnest, friendly exhortations to repentance, because their minds had been poisoned and corrupted by atheistic, antichristian literature, utterly destructive of faith, the root of justification, without which it is impossible to please God. In the hour of death faith and moral certainty, at least, of possessing the truth, alone can give the strength we need. Of all religious systems Christianity alone offers that faith and security that enable men to face the passage from time to eternity with tranquillity and peace. I mean historical Christianity, which is identical with the Catholic Church—that Church that alone possesses unity of faith, unity of worship, and unity of government, the distinguishing marks of her divine institution.

Hence the miserable victims of unbelief, with souls black with many sins, blindly plunge into what they call "the great un-

[1] Matt. xxv. 21.

known," taking, as they are wont to say, their chances. Most of them had been cruelly deceived by their infidel teachers, who induced them to believe that death ends all, that hell is a chimera, a bugbear invented by crafty theologians, and that annihilation is the common lot of all human beings. What a terrible responsibility rests on all atheistic, antichristian writers! God is patient, because He is eternal. He awaits them on their departure from this life. A punishment far severer than that inflicted on their disciples attends them on the threshold of eternity.[2]

462. We find no language strong enough to denounce the civil rulers who in their choice and appointment of university professors, take more account of their known antagonism to religion than of their competence to teach. The result is simply disastrous. The so-called professional graduates turned out year after year from these institutions, veritable hotbeds of atheism and loose moral principles, spread their infidel doctrines in the communities that avail themselves of their services. It is from such infamous teachers that spring the men, who, when called to arms in the defense of their country, boast of knowing nothing and caring nothing about the hereafter. They fight with a courage inspired by mere patriotic fanaticism, and, after death they realize—but too late, alas!—the huge and fatal deception of which they were the victims; a deception that caused them to miss forever the happiness of heaven and to incur the everlasting torments of hell.

"The very anxiety of unbelievers in hell to shirk the consequences of rebelling against God's holy law shows that, in spite of all their efforts, the belief in God's avenging justice cannot be uprooted from the mind and heart of men. The ultimate test that reasoning men will set in the future is simply this: Did God reveal this dogma? Has the Church who teaches it been authorized so to teach? The affirmative answer to these pertinent questions will continue to guide men of all races and nations for all ages to come, not the utterances of any fallible man even if he happens to be professor or president emeritus of Harvard University." [3]

CHAPTER IX

THE PUNITIVE SANCTION TAUGHT BY DIVINE REVELATION IS CONFIRMED BY HUMAN REASON

As we have proved in a former chapter of this book, every rational creature is bound to procure and proclaim the glory of its

[2] See Matt. xi. 21, 22, and Luke x. 13, 14.

[3] From "America" for Dec. 14, 1912, p. 224.

Master, whether it be an elect, a reprobate, a saved, or a lost soul. It is not in the power of man either to glorify God, his Creator, or to refuse to do so. All he can do is to choose in what manner he will glorify Him; either with the blessed by chanting His mercies forever [1] in heaven, or with the reprobates by proclaiming His justice for all eternity in hell. Behold the matter of our choice: I may choose, nay, I must choose either heaven or hell. The alternative is terrible and frightful beyond description. But God's glory will be equally secured whether man's future abode will be in heaven with the angels and the blessed, or in hell with the demons and the damned.[2]

Professor Thomas W. Galloway of the Department of Zoology at Beloit College said at the High School Teachers' Convention at the University of California, July 17, 1917: "The most urgent need of the human race is a moral equivalent for hell." He deprecated the materialistic scientists of modern times who have relegated hell to the scrap-heap of outworn creeds. It may be truly said that if there is no hell, there ought to be one. We might here apply Voltaire's saying: "If there were no God, we should invent one."

463. Reason, when rightly consulted, proves not only the existence of an infinitely perfect Being, God, but also His principal attributes or perfections, such as sanctity, justice, and providence—attributes and perfections which cannot be denied without falling into rank atheism. For an unholy, unjust, and improvident God is no God at all. It is impossible to entertain of God any other idea or conception than that of a perfect Being, possessing in an eminent degree all the endowments proper to human monarchs worthy of their lofty position. As a Ruler endowed with the highest wisdom, power, and justice, He must have provided rewards to the good, the observers of His laws; and punishments to the wicked, their transgressors. As Bishop Vaughan rightly discourses in one of his sermons: "What are we compelled to witness in this world of ours? We behold brute force trampling over weakness, fraud and cunning crushing honesty and truth; greed and ambition occupying the seats of honor and command in our midst. The early Christian martyrs were torn to pieces and devoured by lions and tigers in the public amphitheaters to afford a spectacle to dissolute, heartless pagans. Noble confessors of Christ were racked, tortured, and done to death, not because guilty of any crime, but only because they preached His Gospel, and loved truth better than life itself. Zealous missionaries, who left home and fatherland out of pure love for souls in distant heathen regions, received insult for their self-sacrifice and death as a reward for their heroism." [3] Indeed, innocence and virtue are so sure of provoking enmity

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. 2.
[2] St. Thomas, p. i, q. 19, art. 6.
[3] Commentary, vol. i. p. 312.

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and opposition, that it has become a proverb among men: "*Veritas odium parit*"—"Truth begets hatred." These facts prove how true is the inspired assurance recorded by St. Paul: "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."[4]

But here we may be asked: Is iniquity to triumph forever? Are the holy and innocent to be forever trodden under foot? Are the swords and bayonets of antichristian, atheistic, masonic, socialistic governments to be forever bared to drive out of their homes defenseless religious men and women and guiltless bishops and priests? Shall the tide of flagrant tyranny never turn? Is there no justice in heaven?

We confidently reply: As sure as there is a God who governs the universe, justice shall certainly be done in the end. The wicked shall be punished and the just rewarded. Initial, quick justice is being done every day and every moment, even in the present life. Statistics of mortality prove that, under ordinary conditions, not less than ninety thousand human beings depart from this world every twenty-four hours. Before God's tribunal every one, monarchs and subjects, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, old and young, shall be judged and receive sentence either of salvation or damnation, according to their works. The God-loving and God-fearing have nothing to fear from such an ordeal, for happiness shall be their reward. And what shall be the lot of the ungodly, the impure, the blasphemers, the persecutors of the servants of God? The lot which they themselves have chosen and richly deserved. It is, then, absolutely necessary to admit a just retribution in the world to come, when Almighty God, the Supreme Judge of mankind, will allot recompense to the just, and punishment to the wicked.

464. If what we have stated and proved is not admitted, then this absurd consequence will follow, that God has made no provision whatever for the maintenance of the moral order, for the justification and final triumph of the good, and the vindication of His honor and outraged dignity. If that were true, then we must confess that the very throne of the Omnipotent would be shaken from its very foundation. I see Him fall, alas! from His lofty throne, transformed into a puny idol, who possesses neither the wisdom nor the power to enforce the observance of His laws, and to secure from His creatures the submission and worship due to Him. I see in Him but a weak, helpless legislator, incapable of making His will respected and of imposing on human passions a restraint which, without tampering with men's liberty, would be sufficient to deter all but the recklessly depraved from the commission of sin. Nay, I see in Him the promoter and accomplice of human disorders and crimes; a Being that is indifferent to His own offenses and that has abandoned mankind to the conspiracies of the wicked. Do away with all

[4] 2 Tim. iii. 12.

punitive sanction, with hell and its horrors, and all the consequences I have pointed out will logically follow—a fact that proves the absolute necessity of the punishment threatened to the wicked in the world to come, where alone full justice awaits them.

What we have stated above is fully confirmed by a witness whose testimony must be true, because it originates from God Himself, and that is the voice of human conscience. Yes, this voice asserts and testifies, in the plainest terms, the existence of a Supreme Judge who will allot recompense to virtue and chastisement to crime in the world to come.

The development of this argument will form the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER X

CONSCIENCE A WITNESS TO FUTURE RETRIBUTION

Bishop Vaughan, in his excellent work, "Faith and Folly," furnishes to us the leading thoughts of the present demonstration.

465. Whence comes that marvelous witness, that silent rebuke to crime, whose presence in man's soul is as unmistakable as the faculties of seeing, hearing, and feeling? Why do we feel instinctively and irresistibly that certain acts and lines of conduct are essentially good and to be done, and that others are intrinsically bad and to be shunned? If our actions happen to be in any way contrary to God's holy laws, no violence of passion, no greed of gain or lust of pleasure can disguise from us their true character or hide their deformity from our eyes. While the hand of the assassin is yet red with innocent blood, and the reckless brute in human form still thirsts for vengeance, conscience is even then condemning the perpetrated crime. The tiger devours the flesh of a human victim encountered in an African jungle, and then peacefully sleeps on its bones. A highwayman murders his fellow-man, where no trace can be detected of the foul deed, and yet he cannot shake off the memory of his guilt, and sees accusers starting up on every side. This is no empty imagination. The Sacred Scriptures assure us of the same thing. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." [1] "The wicked man fleeth, when no man pursueth." [2] How shall we account for such facts, as universal as they are true, except on the theory of man's realization of the existence of an Omnipotent Ruler, a Supreme Judge, who in the world to come will do full justice both to the good and to the wicked; to the former by rewarding them for their

[1] Is. xlviii. 22. [2] Prov. xxviii. 1.

virtues, to the latter by punishing them for their crimes. But conscience not merely distinguishes right from wrong, but moreover stings the rebellious with the anguish of bitter remorse. Remorse is the accuser, the witness, and the judge whom God has placed in the heart of the criminal to make him understand that his crime has been seen, weighed, and condemned. Conscience is a judge which we cannot dislodge, control, or bribe. It is not to be browbeaten, and though man may oppose, resist it, and petulantly disregard its injunctions, it still continues to denounce and condemn his evil conduct. If there is no provision for a sure recompense to the observer of the divine law, and for an equally assured punishment to its transgressor, we are at a loss to account for the existence of any remorse at all. If crime need not fear the presence of an infallible, omnipotent Judge, remorse becomes nature's laughing-stock. Who will offer an intelligible explanation of this voice, so sweet in its approval, that some have thought—though wrongly—such approval to be a sufficient reward for well-doing; and yet a voice so terrible in its condemnation that even death is often sought, and embraced as a less intolerable alternative? Hence, some criminals have surrendered themselves to the authorities, holding death by the public executioner more bearable than the stinging reproaches of an outraged conscience, which has justly been called the ever-present hell of living criminals. Now, how shall we account for the presence of this invisible, stern, inexorable judge, the human conscience, unless we admit a future existence, where its unheeded warnings shall be avenged, crime punished and virtue recompensed? I advisedly say, a *future* existence, for evidently it is not here that full justice is done to the good, as well as to the wicked, since we here often witness the misery and oppression of the just and the prosperity and triumph of the wicked.

466. If there be no future life, of what use is conscience? Why should man harken to a voice that speaks deceptively? Why fear threats that are idle and empty? Why should we mind laws if there be no punishment for the lawbreaker, no merit or reward for the law-keeper? Why should we regulate conduct and restrain evil desires if there be no absolute measure of right and wrong, no final court of appeal for the downtrodden, no reward for virtue, and no punishment for sin? What becomes of justice, if one common fate awaits the murderers and the murdered, the robbers and the robbed, the brutal ravisher and the innocent ravished? If there be no future life, conscience is a fraud which we should get rid of, and the sooner the better. But if we cannot stifle the verdict of conscience without first steeping ourselves in villainy and crime, then it follows that conscience must be a trustworthy minister of God, its threats of future punishment true and solemn warnings to evil-doers, and the future

triumph and happiness of the just, to which it points, a great and glorious reality.

467. The value of the argument derived from the testimony of conscience cannot be exaggerated, for of all rational proofs of a future life and consequent retribution, the facts of conscience are the strongest and most convincing. Nothing else in the visible creation can bear such a witness to the existence of the supernatural and of man's accountability to an invisible, supreme lawgiver and judge. Conscience approves and disapproves, justifies and condemns both single human acts and lines of conduct independently of their influence on society; that is, whether they are beneficial or hurtful to it from a utilitarian point of view. In fact, on a thousand practices which worldlings stigmatize as incontestably injurious to the race, conscience positively refuses to utter one syllable of condemnation, whilst, on the other hand, conscience brands as iniquitous many practices useful and profitable, at least apparently, to the temporal prosperity of mankind from an exclusively utilitarian aspect.

The truth is, that conscience asserts the existence of a higher law, the supreme standard of right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice. It defends and safeguards higher interests than those of time, and points in the clearest language to the omnipresence of a divine Legislator and to the sanction He placed on His laws to induce His rational creatures to their observance, and restrain them from their violation. In short, the voice of conscience speaks to every man's heart of the better life beyond the grave, throwing startling gleams of light into the now hidden supernatural world which we are continually approaching, carried onward by the irresistible current of time.

How shall we explain the imperiousness, or peremptoriness, as Newman calls it, of the voice of conscience? It is one of the best established facts, whose existence it is impossible to deny. Its voice, which can neither be stifled by debauchery nor silenced by rebukes, points to a future life which is a stern reality and not a dream—a reality that implies the soul's endless existence, man's accountability, the judgment day, heaven and hell.

Criminals may succeed in evading the grasp of human justice, but they will inevitably fall into the mighty arm of the divine, when the unheeded warnings of guilty conscience shall be avenged.

468. This is the dread tribunal which the infidel scientist Huxley tried to disprove when, in one of his lectures, he said: "We shall sooner or later arrive at a mechanical equivalent of consciousness, just as we have arrived at a mechanical equivalent of heat."[3]

Our reply to this antichristian scientist, who has since gone to his account, is as follows: Conscience is the practical knowl-

[3] Lay Sermons.

edge of moral good and moral evil, which every man possesses within himself. It is an intellectual act that has nothing to do with merely sensitive faculties, and is no more amenable to experimental tests than the concepts of right and wrong. In short, conscience is the voice of God Himself speaking to our hearts and telling us what He would have us do, and what He would have us leave undone. It bears an irresistible testimony to the existing reality of future retribution, and intimates the necessity of both the remunerative and the punitive sanction of God's holy laws.

469. To nullify the value of the testimony of conscience a new theory has been devised the underlying principle of which is this: "The morally good is that which is possessed of material utility; and, on the contrary, that is morally bad which causes us material disadvantages." This theory is radically wrong, for morality and utility are two separate things and need not be unavoidably associated. Hence the honest, upright man who is resolutely determined to act in accordance with the injunctions of the moral law, does not concern himself with the personal advantages or disadvantages resulting from such action, but he *chiefly* takes into account the fact that he must do certain things because they are in themselves good, and avoid others because they are essentially evil. I advisedly say *chiefly*, for the good accruing from doing what is right and the evil springing from doing what is wrong should be an impelling but not a chief motive of action. Admit utility as the ground of morality and it will be easy to justify theft, assassination, etc., and to open the way to unbridled license, and sanction the perpetration of the most awful crimes. How often the observance of the moral law is found to be in direct opposition to our personal worldly interests, and demanding the bitterest sacrifices! It is, then, supremely important to entertain correct ideas on the subject at issue. As sound ethics teaches us, conscience is the judgment passed by practical reason upon the moral worth of our actions; it is the application of the standard of the moral law to our thoughts, words, and acts; it is a divine voice moving us to that which we ought to do, and deterring us from that which we ought to leave undone. And though it may be subject to diverse influences, yet, so far as first principles and their application are concerned, it is everywhere one and the same, which accounts for its divine origin, God Himself, unchangeable truth, and the supreme standard of all moral perfection.

470. The foregoing considerations are fully confirmed by the testimonies of both ancient and modern writers, of whom we shall here cite a few:

"What never-ending pains are the pangs of a guilty conscience, a mind overburdened with the recollections of perpetrated evil deeds, and fearful of itself."[4]

[4] Seneca Epist. 163.

"A wicked conscience, even when it is successful in iniquity, is tormented with remorse, and the expectation of most dreadful punishments." [5]

"The furies pursue the criminals not with burning torches, as the poets feign, but with the tortures springing from the remorse of a guilty conscience." [6]

"There is no witness so terrible, no accuser so powerful as conscience, which dwells in the breast of all men." [7]

"Great fear of divine vengeance falls upon the foes of peace and the scourges of mankind." [8]

" . . . Beneath the earth
Great Hades holds his throne, the gloomy judge
Of sinful men, and in his awful look,
—The soul's accusing conscience—reads its crimes." [9]

"Sure there is none but fears a future state;
And when the most obdurate swear they do not,
Their trembling hearts belie their boasting tongues." [10]

"Two things are awful to me, the vastness of the starry firmament, and the sense of responsibility in man." [11]

CHAPTER XI

ANCIENT AND MODERN TESTIMONIES ON THE EXISTENCE AND JUSTICE OF PUNITIVE SANCTION

ATTITUDE OF OLD SECTS TOWARD BELIEF IN FUTURE RETRIBUTION

471. We advisedly speak here of "old sects," for a full account is given in Part X of the tenets held by the sects sprung from the "Reformation" of the sixteenth century and consecutively up to modern times, when the Evangelical Alliance was organized in England in 1846 and adopted in the United States in 1867. It is there shown that the leading Protestant denominations are in full agreement with the Catholic Church on the Christian dogma of future everlasting rewards and punishments. Official, authentic documents are there alleged of such belief of the Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Reformed Church, Baptists, and Methodists.

Among the early sects are reckoned the Gnostics, Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Arians, Manicheans, Macedonians, Pela-

[5] Quintilian, De Inst. Orat., lib. xii. [6] Cicero, De Legibus, 1, 14.
[7] Polybius, Hist., xviii, 26. [8] Homer, Odyss., xiv, 122.
[9] Æschylus, Eumenides, 263–265. [10] Dryden.
[11] Immanuel Kant, Ethics of Pure Reason.

gians and Semi-Pelagians, Eutychians, Monophysites, Monothelites, and Nestorians. The three last named are the only ones that are still dragging a lingering existence in the Orient; all the others are extinct, dead and buried. Now, these sects, all anathematized by the Catholic Church, have in their turn rejected several articles of Christian faith; but they have all retained the dogma of future, endless retribution. Some of them rejected the temporary purgatory, but none of them denied the eternal hell. Yet it was a question of a truth that arouses the fury of the passions, sets all vices against it, and causes human nature, so greedy of carnal pleasures, to rebel against it. How can we explain this unanimity in spite of so many adverse circumstances? That dogma was so deeply rooted in the Christian conscience that not even the boldest heresiarchs dared to tamper with it. Here, as in other similar instances, it was the voice of human conscience compelled against itself to bear witness to that awful truth.

Singularly consonant with what the Gospel teaches on the equity of the divine judgment are the traditions of the ancient Asiatic nations, who learned from primitive revelation and transmitted to their posterity the dogma of final retribution, which allotted eternal reward to the just and inflicted eternal punishment on the wicked. Thus, in a fragment of the Zend-Avesta of the Persians, the soul whose conscience is found at judgment adorned with good thoughts, words, and deeds, is admitted to a place of heavenly bliss, to the everlasting gates, the fair realm of uncreated light, the world that passes not away. And the wicked soul, judged first by her own conscience, is ushered before the dread tribunal and condemned for her evil thoughts, words, and deeds to everlasting hell. She is punished also because she closed her heart against the poor, and her life on earth was ever bent to ill.[1]

De Quatrefages tells us that the Phœnicians believed in recompense being granted to chosen souls beyond the grave.

The belief of the Persians is contained in the Zend-Avesta, their sacred book, according to which, after death, the just are received by Ormuzd, the good deity, and the wicked are handed over to Ahrima, the evil god.

The Druids admitted the truth of a future happy life, to deserve which they had particularly to practise courage, the virtue dear to their forefathers.

A. GREEK WRITERS

472. Among the most illustrious philosophers and writers of antiquity, Plato (B. C. 428) holds the foremost place. Posterity shows its appreciation of the extraordinary talent of this man by designating him with the rare title of Plato the Divine. In sev-

[1] The Month, October, 1885.

eral of his books, preserved to this day, in spite of the ravages of time, he takes delight in treating, in the form of dialogues, the all important topic of men's future existence and particularly of the lot that awaits them there, according to the deeds of their present life.

Thus in his *Phædo* he reckons three distinct classes of departed souls. To the first belong those that have led an upright life; they all receive their reward according to the merits of their good deeds, and are at once reckoned among the happy. In the second class or category are numbered those who committed what he calls remediable or curable sins—*peccata sanabilia*. These have repented of their evil-doing, and when delivered from prison they pass to the higher places. As to the third class, whom he designates as incorrigibles—*insanabiles*—on account of the gravity of their crimes, they meet their fitting fate in Tartarus, whence they shall never come out.[2]

Can any Christian fail to see in these expressions of the Greek sage a plain intimation of heaven, purgatory, and hell, the three places allotted to human souls according to their deserts before the day of the last judgment? When we study the traditions of antiquity and compare them with the teachings of the Church we find in them an additional proof of the harmony existing between the dogmas of Christianity and the intuitions of the human mind.

In the *Gorgias* he writes: "From the reign of Saturn this law concerning mankind has always prevailed, and is still in vigor with the gods, that whoever should have led a just and pious life, when dead, would pass to the Island of the Blessed, and there enjoy the highest happiness, being free from all kinds of evil. But that, on the contrary, he who should have led a wicked and impious life, should go into the prison of vengeance and justice, which is called Tartarus."[3]

Plutarch (A. D. 50), the famous philosopher and historian, in his essay *De Tarda Dei Vindicta*—"The Tardy Vengeance of the Deity," argues thus: "Reason proves both the existence of God's providence, and the immortality of men's souls. The Provident Deity has disposed that human souls should be immortal so that the just should have their reward and the wicked should not remain without punishment."[4]

Pythagoras (B. C. 584) enjoyed so great a reputation that more than six hundred disciples attended his night lectures on philosophy. Several able writers have exonerated him from the charge of teaching the doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls. According to the testimony of Cicero,[5] Dionysius Laertius, and other historians and some poets, Pythag-

[2] Vol. i, n. 62, p. 89. Edition Firmin-Didot. [3] Patuzzi, p. 49.
[4] Patuzzi, pp. 49–50. [5] De Senectute.
[6] Hist., l. viii. c. 21.

oras held and taught the divine origin and immortality of the human soul and the doctrine of retribution in the next life. The just are transferred to the Valley of Joy; the wicked are plunged into a horrible place in punishment of their crimes. As to the just soul he expresses himself in this remarkable language: "The soul that has nobly conquered itself in the study and pursuit of virtue and truth after death wings its flight to God and, being immortal, is transformed into the Deity as far as it is possible to man." This beautiful thought naturally reminds us of the two following New Testament texts: "That by these [precious promises] you may be made partakers of the divine nature."[6] "We know that when He [God] shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is."[7]

Iamblicus (B. C. 325), one of the most renowned followers of the doctrines of Pythagoras, states the teaching of his master and of the Pythagorean philosophical school in this striking way: "If death were to put an end to the existence of both the body and the soul, death would be to wicked men a great gain. But since the soul is seen to be immortal, it cannot escape from evils and be safe, unless it has been both very good and very wise. For the soul, when approaching the next life, can bring nothing along with itself except probity or iniquity, which we know will be to the departed the cause either of good or of evil. Hence the just soul, admitted to the blessed mansions of heaven, will dwell with God. But the one which stained itself by impious deeds will be condemned to the infernal regions, there to undergo the punishment it deserved."[8]

Homer (B. C. 1000 [?]) bears witness to the truth we are discussing. Professor William S. Tyler of Amherst says: "The paramount fundamental principle which Homer inculcates with regard to sin is, that it is sure to meet with merited punishment."

"Give me, just Jove, to punish lawless lust,
And lay the Trojan gasping in the dust;
Destroy the aggressor, aid my righteous cause
Avenge the breach of hospitable laws.
Let the example future times proclaim
And guard from wrong fair friendship's holy name."
—Iliad, iii. 351.

Pindar (B. C. 522), the greatest lyric poet of classic Greece, is our next witness to future retribution. He thus proclaims the fate of the good in Elysium, and that of the wicked in Tartarus, the ancient term for the abode of the reprobates: "The good, enjoying eternal sunshine night and day, spend a life free from

[6] 2 Peter i. 4. [7] 1 John iii. 2.
[8] Adhort. ad Philosoph. lib. ii, c. 13; Patuzzi, pp. 72–73.

labor. As they took pleasure in keeping the plighted faith, they enjoy a tearless existence, while the impious have to endure woes too horrible to recall."[9]

Euripides (B. C. 481), the celebrated tragic poet of Athens, tells how vengeance overtakes the wicked: "Whoever thinks he can go on doing wrong without the knowledge of the gods, acts foolishly. He will be overtaken when vengeance finds leisure and steals silently and imperceptibly, striking the guilty; and he will then suffer for all his misdeeds."[10]

Æschylus (B. C. 525), another distinguished Greek tragedian, speaks thus: "Death is no escape for the wicked from their sins, or the consequences of them. Their crimes will follow them into another world. In Hades there is a tribunal, which the wicked cannot evade, a faithful record of their lives and a just judge, who will certainly bring them to judgment and punish them according to their deeds."[11]

Celsus (A. D. 220), as we learn from Origen, his victorious antagonist, was candid enough to make this avowal: "Christians think and believe that those who lead a holy life will be rewarded after death; and that the impious will suffer eternal torments; a belief common to all the nations of the world."[12]

Professor W. G. T. Shedd, in view of these testimonies to the innate sense of justice, remarks: "The righteous indignation into which the judicial part of the human soul is stirred by sin is the finite but homogenous expression of that anger against moral evil, which burns with an eternal intensity in the purity of the Divine Essence."[13]

B. TESTIMONIES OF LATIN AUTHORS

473. Passing from Greece to Rome we meet with similar thoughts and sentiments in her classic writers, both in poetry and prose.

Lucretius Carus (B. C. 95), in his poem *De Rerum Natura,* expresses himself thus: "If men could pursuade themselves that at death there will be an end to all miseries, then they would in some way show their enmity to all religious beliefs, and their opposition to the threats of sages. But now they have neither reason nor power for so doing, for they must fear the eternal pains at death. *Aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.*"[14]

Horace (B. C. 65) writes: "Vengeance from Jupiter irritated by men's contempt of his laws, though with halting steps, seldom fails to overtake the criminals as they rush along in their career of wickedness."[15]

[9] 11 Olymp. 109.
[10] Fragment attributed to him.
[11] Agamemnon, line 1540.
[12] Origen, Contra Celsum.
[13] Bibl. Sacra., vol. xvi. p. 731.
[14] L. i, 109–112.
[15] Od. ii, 2, 29.

Marcus Tullius Cicero (B. C. 106). It would be difficult to find among Roman authors, nay, among all the sages of antiquity, a man of greater learning and authority. Not less renowned as a philosopher than as an orator, he left numerous writings, in many of which he bears witness to the truth we are vindicating.

He thus speaks in the first of the *Tusculan Disputations:* "According to the two different lines of men's conduct, twofold will be the condition of the departed. For those that have pursued a career of wrongdoing are excluded from the company of the gods, for they contaminated themselves in lust and every kind of turpitude, blinded by which they defiled their homes, becoming guilty of vices and crimes. But those who have maintained themselves upright and pure are admitted to the abode of the gods."

Like sentiments are found in his philosophical essay, the *Somnium Scipionis,* wherein he writes that Scipio constantly adhered to the teachings of Pythagoras concerning the immortality of men's souls and their future retribution of reward or of punishment.[16]

Here it is important to observe that though the writings of ancient authors are at times interspersed with expressions that savor of polytheism, yet this circumstance does not detract from the value of their testimonies on the question at issue, for they substantially reproduce, in their peculiar language, the true doctrine on future retribution, that is, on the existence of punitive sanction in the life to come, and they recognized as supreme one of their deities, as has been noticed with regard to ancient nations.

THE ANCIENT GREEK AND LATIN POETS AS GUARDIANS OF MORAL TRUTHS

474. Father Thebaud, cited elsewhere, devotes several pages of his work on Gentilism before Christianity to the development of this subject, showing that they embodied in their songs a number of moral maxims and sayings, eminently fitted to promote and foster in men habits of honesty, virtue, and integrity. In Parts III and VII we cite quotations from them, which go far to prove that they reproduced in their poetic works a number of highly useful moral truths and principles, such as the existence of a Superior Deity, its providence over mankind, man's responsibility to an invisible power, future retribution, etc.

Fr. Patuzzi in his frequently quoted book *De Futuro Impiorum Statu*—"The Future State of the Wicked," reasons substantially thus: The authority of the ancient bards of Greece and Rome must be greatly appreciated, for they bear witness to the belief of their people in the truth of eternal punish-

[16] Patuzzi, pp. 25, 26, 31, 54, 67, 68, 69.

ment. With poetic license they mix with their statements, it is true, fictitious and mythological narratives that afforded to Plato and Cicero some pretext for their criticism and disparagement of their poetic effusions. As Mr. Gladstone pertinently observes, the primitive brightness of the truths contained in their poems gradually grew dimmer and error became more and more prevalent. It is, then, true to say that the further back in antiquity our researches extend, the more pure we find the belief of mankind. The corruption here referred to was mainly due to the baneful influence of mythology and the introduction of magic in later ages. We may, then, answer the critics who belittle the authority of poets, by quoting the well-known saying: "*Distingue tempora et concordabis jura nec non facta.*"—"Distinguish the times and contradiction will vanish."

C. TESTIMONIES OF MODERN WRITERS

475. We use the term "modern" as distinguished from the "ancient" classics, and as embracing a comparatively extensive period, particularly from the Middle Ages to recent times.

For obvious reasons we limit our quotations to the works of eminent writers that bear witness to the necessity and existence of retribution beyond the grave. Some of the authors, such as Dante, Milton, and others, whose testimony asserts not only the reality of future retribution, but also its everlasting duration, will be more appropriately cited in the next part of our work, which is particularly devoted to the question of the eternity of punitive sanction.

Racine (A. D. 1639): "Athalie, what does the law of the Lord say to you? That God wished to be loved; that He avenges, sooner or later, His holy name when blasphemed; that He resisteth the proud and punishes the murderers." [17]

Voltaire (A. D. 1694). In a drama he introduces a heathen speaking thus: "The gods are witnesses of secret crimes. Learn from this that hidden misdeeds are seen by the gods. The more guilty are the great, and the heavier is their punishment. Kings, tremble on your throne, and fear their justice," [18]—a precious confession, though expressed in a pagan form, from the mouth of an inveterate antichristian blasphemer.

Metastasio (A. D. 1698): St. Helena, as she witnesses the pagan desecration of Mount Calvary, is made to speak thus to the Lord: "I see well, O Heavenly Father, why Thy thunderbolts do not hasten to destroy the impious. Thou art slow to punish either, that bad men may have time to repent or that the righteous may be made perfect through suffering."

Here my clerical friends cannot fail to recall a parallel thought of the great Doctor, St. Augustine, in the fourth lesson in Cœna Domini: "Do not think that wicked men are allowed

[17] Athalie, ii, 7.

[18] Semiramis, v. 8.

to exist without Almighty God drawing any good from them. For every bad man is permitted to live, either that he may be converted; or that a virtuous man may be tried and sanctified by his malice."

476. If space permitted it, many more quotations could be alleged from eminent writers, both Catholic and non-Catholic. But we must hasten to discuss the most weighty and terrific character or quality of future retribution, that is, the eternity of its duration, which will form the subject of the following part of our book. Before proceeding to the next question, however, we here insert a discussion that has a very important bearing on several of the preceding and following parts of this volume, as the reader will see for himself.

CHAPTER XII

PRIMITIVE TRADITION AND WHAT IT ACCOUNTS FOR

477. It is asked: How are we to account for the universal belief of mankind in future retribution; a belief held by peoples of various characters, habits, customs, and of different degrees of education and mental culture?

We reply: 1. It is not the product of science or of study, for it is found to precede every philosophical reflection. Hence it has been rightly said that man was religious before being philosopher. It is for this reason that Tertullian, the great African apologist, said of the human soul that it is *naturally* Christian.

2. It is not the invention of any religious sect, for this belief penetrates all religions, however disparate they may be among themselves.

3. It cannot be attributed to disorderly human passions, for this creed antagonizes them all.

4. Is it perchance the outcome of ignorance? No, by no means, for knowledge and learning only confirm it, as it is found more fully developed in the nations that are most civilized.

Whence, then, does this belief in future retribution come? It springs from the primitive divine revelation, which, in many cases, is a most helpful reaffirmation of several moral principles and truths, which are accessible to human reason. As will be shown at greater length in this same seventh part, these primitive religious and moral truths were imparted by the Creator Himself to our first progenitors, from whom they were handed down to all the future generations scattered throughout the globe.

478. It is understood that we do not claim here any perfect agreement as to the precise nature of the rewards and punishments to be allotted by the Supreme Judge, or as to the degree

of guilt punishable by eternal pains; but we do contend that there existed among ancient peoples a substantially unanimous consent in admitting an endless happiness for the just and an eternal hell for the wicked. Among the nations of antiquity the most favored in this respect were, no doubt, the Israelites, who, besides possessing the Mosaic law, had also at hand the primitive divine revelation coming down from Adam, preserved in its integrity through the testimony of the long-lived patriarchs.

479. Primitive tradition, then, and the light of reason were no doubt the two sources and channels of religious truths and moral principles among ancient nations before the Christian era.

Fr. Thebaud, in his work on Gentilism before Christianity, writes (p. 30): "Among the truths which the nations on parting from one another carried to their new homes, are reckoned the unity of God, or monotheism; the exalted state of primeval man during the golden age; his fall, to be repaired by a future Redeemer; the immortality of his soul; and the belief in future retribution."

The same author on p. 283 says: "God, full of love for man, gave him from the beginning a deposit of religious truths in order that the truths demonstrable by human reason might be more safely guarded and secured to mankind."

We may appropriately recall here the teachings of St. Thomas in his *Summa Theologica*,[19] where he speaks as follows: "The help of divine revelation was needed because without it, God's knowledge, though accessible to human reason, could be attained only by few men after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors."

We may certainly apply the same reasoning with regard to other highly important rational and moral truths within reach of human reason, such as the soul's immortality, man's accountability to a superior power, and the existence of future endless retribution. In fact, the same holy Doctor lays this down as a well-established principle, that Almighty God, at all times, supplied men with the necessary instruction concerning matters of salvation. "*Quolibet tempore instructi sunt homines divinitus de agendis secundum quod erat expediens ad salutem electorum.*"[20] Hence the primitive revelation of these same truths was the means adopted by God's merciful providence for the preservation of those truths in their fulness and integrity, till the dawn of Christian revelation, which proclaimed them in all their splendor. "God who in sundry times and divers manners spoke in times past to the Fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son."[21]

These two sources of knowledge, then, human reason and God's primeval revelation, are not only perfectly compatible with each other, but, moreover, they are mutually harmonized.

[19] P. i, q. i, art. 1. [20] Quoted by Patuzzi. [21] Heb. i. 1, 2.

Whilst divine revelation confirms and ratifies the truths ascertainable by reason, reason, in its turn, ratifies and confirms the teachings of supernatural revelation whether accessible to human capacity or placed beyond its reach.

As a fitting conclusion to this chapter we here adduce the testimony of the three German ethnologists, quoted in another part of our volume, who with untiring diligence investigated the belief of the human race of both ancient and modern times on the following fundamental truths, the existence of the Creator, the immortality of man's soul, and future retribution. They are Gustav Flügel, Joseph Knabenbauer, S.J., and Victor Cathrein, S.J. They all bear witness to the fact of the paramount influence exercised by primitive tradition on preserving from error such rational and moral truths as could be known by the light of reason among ancient peoples and the uncultured tribes of comparatively modern times.[22] (See n. **519**.)

[22] See Etudes Philosophiques sur le Christianisme—Primitive Revelation, vol. i, ch. v.

PART VII

THE ETERNITY OF HELL

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

480. As has been shown in the preceding part, it is certainly conformable to right reason that after the probation of the present life, Divine Providence should allot to each of its rational creatures either reward or punishment, according to their deserts. Thus the moral order shall be vindicated and restored, virtue shall be duly recompensed, and wrongdoing deservedly punished. When the question is asked, "What will be in detail the precise character, nature, quality, and duration of future retribution?" We must answer that human reason cannot decide such matters with any degree of certainty and must consequently derive such knowledge only from divine revelation. And this for the best of reasons, for such dispositions as concern man's destiny depend entirely on God's free will, and on the decrees of His providence in the government of mankind. That the Lord has made such a revelation is a historical fact which it is impossible to deny. By consulting its oracles we are enabled to give precise details of both the remunerative and the punitive sanction of God's laws. As it appears from its heading, the question to be discussed in this part of our work is the duration of the punitive sanction, of the punishment of the wicked in hell, a question which, like the ones referred to above, is to be decided exclusively from the data of divine revelation. Such data or testimonies of Holy Scripture will be duly alleged in the following chapter, and strikingly confirmed in the subsequent ones.

481. As Father Lessius observes, fully to grasp the perfect justice of eternal punishment we should be able to understand thoroughly both the infinite majesty of God and the gravity of mortal sin, the divine offense by which His infinite dignity is outraged, insulted and despised.

482. Richard Baxter says on this point: "Alas! we are both blind and partial. You can never fully know the deserts of sin, till you know fully the evil of sin, and you can never know the evil of sin, till you fully know:

1. The excellence of the soul, which it deformeth;

2. The excellence of holiness, which it does obliterate;
3. The justice and excellence of the law, which it violates;
4. The excellence of heavenly glory, which it does despise;
5. The excellence and office of reason, which it treadeth on.
6. No, till you know the infinite excellency, almightiness, and holiness of God, against whom sin is committed." [1]

As considerable light is thrown on this somewhat dark subject by God's own word in Holy Writ, the voice of Christian tradition, the sentiments of both the Greek and the Latin Fathers, the reasonings of theologians, and the judgment of notable non-Catholic writers, we will avail ourselves of all those sources of knowledge to render more and more intelligible the truth of the endless punishment of the wicked.

Both the just and the reprobates know that their respective lot is eternal. St. Thomas, treating of this very question, says that there is no hope for the lost, for they are sure that they shall never be delivered from the eternal pains.[2] Hence the certainty that their damnation is to be everlasting constitutes for the wicked their greatest affliction.

483. Among the characters or qualities of the infernal pains there is surely none as terrible and dreadful in the eyes of all believers as their everlasting duration. This awful feature of hell's dungeon is so frequently proclaimed in Holy Writ and the constant tradition of the past that it seems impossible for any man to entertain any doubt about it. But alas! what appeared impossible, says the holy Doctor St. Basil,[3] has actually occurred through the artifices of Satan, the sworn enemy of the human race, as St. Ignatius calls him.

Reliable writers, such as J. Godfrey Raupert in his "Modern Spiritism" (p. 239), testify that at some spiritualistic sittings, when a supposed departed soul was asked by one of the audience if hell really existed and was eternal the answer was an emphatic negative, accompanied by peals of laughter meant, of course, to ridicule the very idea of any belief in hell and its eternity. It is well known that the answers to this and similar questions proposed in those spiritualistic séances are given, not by the souls of the departed, but by demons, the fallen angels.

484. In this matter we are quite safe and orthodox in adhering to the authority of Catholic theologians, who speak on this subject with notable unanimity and justify their teaching by citing the doctrinal decisions of the Roman congregations. Father Lehmkuhl, S. J., a living author of high standing, speaks substantially as follows: [4] There can be no question that in the so-called spiritistic séances or meetings a very great deal that happens is due to fraud or trickery on the part either of the medium or of the responsible person in charge. But good evidence

[1] Quoted by the Rev. William Reid in his Everlasting Punishment, p. 196.
[2] 2a 2ae, qu. xviii, art. 3. [3] Reg. Brev. [4] Theol. Moral, vol. i. p. 225.

also exists that manifestations occur, which can only be explained by the intervention of forces, that transcend what is natural in man, that is to say, by diabolical agency. For utterances, which are not only trivial but also directed against the true Faith, and against Christian piety, cannot proceed from God, or from any good spirit, or from the blessed in heaven. Hence we can only attribute them to evil and damned spirits. And since the souls of men that are lost, neither of their own power, nor by permission of Divine Providence do, ordinarily speaking, hold intercourse with persons still living on earth,[5] no alternative remains but to attribute them to diabolical intervention. The golden, just mean must here be followed by avoiding, on one hand, the extreme of excessive incredulity, and, on the other, the extreme of excessive credulity.

According to a recent decision of the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, issued April 24, 1917, it is not lawful to be present at the experimentings held in spiritistic meetings, whatever may be the intention of the person assisting.[6]

In our days many deluded creatures, either misrepresenting the Divine Scriptures or rejecting their authority altogether, do not hesitate to deny the truth of hell's endless torments, or even its very existence. There is a class of people, particularly Unitarians, who, when asked what they think of the Christian dogma of eternal punishment, will answer that "such a belief has, no doubt, its advantages from a moral point of view, inasmuch as it exercises a wholesome restraint upon the passions of the uneducated classes; but, in the presence of modern culture and refinement, the need of this deterrent vanishes."

There must, then, exist for this privileged class of humanity, usually the "higher up" of society, some other kind of Gospel quite different from that of Christ, though it is well known that, on one occasion, at the conclusion of His sermon, He said: "What I say to you, I say to all, watch."[7] As wealthy people have at hand abundant means for the full gratification of their passions and caprices, it would seem that to keep them within bounds, they need no other help or restraint but cultivated, refined, cultured minds. "*Credat Judæus Apella!*"[8]—"Let gullible people believe it!"

Besides the Unitarians, the principal modern adversaries are the Universalists, the Socinians, the advocates of what they call voluntary immortality and of annihilation; the Agnostics; many Protestants of our own times; and the unbelievers of the past two centuries. As their arguments form the stock in trade of nearly all the difficulties against eternal punishment, we shall endeavor to do full justice to all our opponents in the two following parts

[5] Luke xvi. 26.

[6] See St. Thomas, In II Sent., Dist. vii, q. 3, art. 1, ad 2; 1ª q. 89, art. 8, ad 2.

[7] Mark xiii. 37.

[8] Horace, Sat. 1, 5, 100.

of our work, which will be wholly devoted to the solution of the objections raised from different quarters against the truth of our thesis.

After these preliminary notions we at once proceed to the statement of the first and chief proof, that of Holy Scripture.

For brevity's sake we shall quote in full only one or two texts from such inspired books as refer to the eternal duration of the infernal pains, and cite chapter and verse of other passages of the same sacred writers, which the reader may easily consult.

485. Attentive readers will not fail to notice that all the Scriptural texts to be adduced conspire to demonstrate the same truth, though in different ways.

1. Thus, the eternity of torments is asserted by texts that explicitly describe them as everlasting. They speak of the eternal fire, eternal ignominy, eternal perdition, and the everlasting chains of the reprobates, demons and men.

2. Some texts demonstrate the eternity of hell's torments by plainly denying their termination or end.

3. Other texts testify that both the reward of the just and the punishment of the wicked are to last forever.

4. The eternity of hell's sufferings is proved by the Scriptural testimonies which deny to the reprobates all hope of future liberation or forgiveness.

5. Lastly, the everlasting duration of future chastisement is clearly established by those passages of Holy Writ which deny to the bad angels, the demons and to the damned human creatures all hope of liberation, as intimated by the sentence of the Supreme Judge: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." [9]

We may say that there is no truth laid down in God's sacred record more evident than the dogma we are now dealing with. In fact, as has been noticed by Biblical scholars, there is scarcely a passage in the inspired writings, particularly in the New Testament, where mention is made of hell, in which its eternity is not also proclaimed. Mr. Maurice, one of our opponents, admits "that there is very much more about eternal punishment in the Gospel than in the Mosaic law." [10]

486. As it happens with other words, the term "eternal" and its equivalents employed in Holy Scripture have either an extended or a restricted meaning, according to the things and beings to which they are applied. Thus, when attributed to God's life, they signify a duration without beginning, without succession, and without end. When spoken of human institutions or of some events, referring to things known *(aliunde)* from other evidences to be of a transitory order, those terms imply a lapse of time more or less prolonged. When they are predicated of spirits or souls naturally indestructible and of things affecting

[9] Matt. xxv. 41. [10] Reid, p. 131.

them as such, they mean a duration that shall have no end. It is in this last sense that we must take the sentence either of eternal reprobation, or of eternal salvation pronounced on every human soul, as it appears before God's tribunal and confirmed at the last judgment. In fact, the sentence of condemnation uttered by the Supreme Judge, "And these [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment," is equivalent to the expression: "They shall be punished everlastingly," that is, as long as they shall last, i. e., forever, since they are immortal. How can a punishment be called everlasting unless the punished last everlastingly? For the doctrine of St. Augustine on this point see *Enchiridion Patristicum,* p. 654. n. 1779, and p. 659, n. 1802. A like reasoning may be applied to the sentence of salvation, "But the just shall go into life everlasting." The just shall possess that life, so long as they shall live, that is, forever, for they are immortal: hence it shall truly be for them an everlasting life.

CHAPTER II

SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONIES ON THE ETERNITY OF HELL

A. OLD TESTAMENT

487. "The Lord Almighty will take revenge on them [the wicked], in the day of judgment He will visit them. For He will give fire and worms into their flesh, that they may burn and may feel forever." [1]

"A land of misery, and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth." [2]

The following commentators, SS. Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Basil the Great, and Thomas Aquinas, unanimously interpret the two above passages as descriptive of the infernal regions.[3]

See Job xx. 18. For its interpretation see Knoll, Theologia Dogmatica, vol. vi. p. 853.

"And they [the wicked] shall fall after this without honor, and be a reproach among the dead forever." [4]

"Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? . . . Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" [5]

"And many of those, that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach to see it always." [6]

B. NEW TESTAMENT

488. The Lord in His infinite wisdom was not satisfied to have

[1] Judith xvi. 20, 21. [2] Job x. 22.
[3] Migne, Cursus Scripturae, vol. xiii. p. 919. [4] Wis. iv. 19.
[5] Is. xxxiii, 14; lxvi. 24. [6] Daniel xii. 2.

this great truth announced to mankind by His prophets only. He wished that this everlasting penal sanction of His law should be again promulgated to the human race by no less an authority than that of His Divine Son. Let us then hear the Incarnate Word Himself proclaiming to human creatures the eternal duration of the punishment awaiting impenitent sinners in the infernal prison. His sayings concerning future punishment form a prominent feature of His teaching. No son of thunder among His apostles has so emphasized the gloomy fact, or established it in such dread description of unalterable suffering. Hence the doctrine of the New Testament regarding that awful truth can be adequately determined in every essential point from the words of Christ Himself. According to His explicit proclamation, future punishment, as decreed by Divine Justice, does away with all theories of universal restoration, of extinction of being, and of temporary duration.

As we read the Gospel record we find that in all that Jesus says there is not a trace of speculation or conjecture, nothing but the inflow of an imperturbable conviction. He spoke as one having authority, as the multitudes acknowledged. He did not argue or dispute. To Him man's destiny to survive the dissolution of the grave is an axiom; not a question to be debated, but a fact to be believed and accepted with joy. What some men had ventured to suggest as a daring surmise, a glowing hope, a glorious possibility, Jesus set forth as a clear, incontrovertible truth. In short, He carried the proofs of His utterances in Himself, in His unique personality, the magnetism that attracted thousands to hear Him. And He employed the same clear, unmistakable language when He spoke of the everlasting punishment reserved to impenitent sinners. No description of prophets or apostles or of any inspired writers can compare with that which issued from the mouth of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Living God.

We specially commend the following sentences of Jesus Christ to the serious attention of Universalists and to the modern Origenists:

"One jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled."[7]

"Heaven and earth shall pass; but My words shall not pass."[8]

"And these [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just, into life everlasting."[9]

"And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life, maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting than

[7] Matt. v. 18.
[8] Matt. xxiv. 35; Apoc. xxii. 18, 19
[9] Matt. xxv. 46; see also Matt. iii. 12.

having two feet to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." [10]

"The chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." [11]

"He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." [12]

Cornelius à Lapide, the famous Biblical commentator, expounding the preceding text, says: "God's anger shall torment the guilty unbeliever forever in hell," and confirms his interpretation by the authority of two early fathers. Euthimius and Cyril of Alexandria.

What the Divine Master taught on the endless duration of future retribution His apostles and disciples faithfully repeated to the primitive Christians. To render these salutary doctrinal warnings permanently beneficial to all future generations, Divine Providence disposed that they should be consigned to the Sacred Record and preserved in their full integrity even to the end of time, the consummation of the world.

"In a flame of fire giving vengeance to them who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall suffer eternal punishment." [13]

"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own confusion; wandering stars, to whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever." [14]

The holy Apostle here intimates the eternal chastisement threatened to the Simonians, Nicolaites, Gnostics, the heresiarchs of his time.

"And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up forever and ever; neither have they rest day nor night." [15]

"And the false prophet shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." [16]

"The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers and whoremongers, and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [17] For explanation of second death see Apocalypse xix. 3.

Of these three last texts our adversaries, the Universalists, have said that they are too obscure. We must say, on the contrary, that they are rather too plain, hence their shrinking from them.

489. The following is indeed a remarkable admission on the

[10] Mark ix. 42–47; Is. lxvi. 24. [11] Luke iii. 17.
[12] John iii. 36. [13] 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. [14] Jude i. 13.
[15] Apoc. xiv. 11. [16] Apoc. xx. 10. [17] Apoc. xxi. 8.

part of the advocates of a second trial after death on behalf of poor, unfortunate sinners who have failed in the first of the present life. They frankly confess that not a single passage can be cited from either the Old or the New Testament which even hints at a continued or second probation after death. This is the candid admission of an American writer: "I have long searched with anxious solicitude for a text in the Bible which would even *seem* to favor the idea of a future probation. I cannot find it." [18]

Here we must observe that numerous testimonies exactly contrary to the upholders of future probations are found in the Bible, from which we quote the following:

1. "To-day if you shall hear His voice harden not your hearts." [19]

2. "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able." [20]

3. "Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation." [21]

4. "Whilst we have time, let us work good." [22]

5. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." [23]

6. "To-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." [24]

7. "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." [25]

An irrefutable proof of hell's eternity can be drawn from the declaration of Christ regarding His traitor. He said of Judas Iscariot: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed: it were better for him, if that man had not been born." [26]

490. No Christian will dare attribute to the words of Christ, especially on so awful a theme, a mere rhetorical or dramatic force. And yet if those words really mean what they clearly convey, they are decisive of the question before us, that is, of the absolute exclusion of any future restoration or liberation of the lost. But if, according to the modern Origenists, and the upholders of general restorationism, Judas is to be delivered from hell, and admitted to heavenly bliss, it would be simply untrue to say that it were better for him never to have been born. Even were ages of woe his allotment, yet if an eternity of happiness is finally to succeed the long sufferings, it would be good for him to have been born. If Christ spoke the truth—and to say the contrary is sheer blasphemy—His words prove that the traitor disciple is indeed the son of perdition condemned to everlasting woe. And for a like reason it may be truly said of every reprobate that it were better if he had not been born.

[18] H. N. Oxenham, Catholic Eschatology and Universalism, p. 145—note.
[19] Ps. xciv. 8. [20] Luke xiii. 24. [21] 2 Cor. vi. 2; Is. xlix. 8.
[22] Gal. vi. 10. [23] Heb. ii. 3. [24] Heb. iv. 7.
[25] Apoc. xii. 12. [26] Matt. xxvi. 24.

CHAPTER III

THE ETERNITY OF HELL ACCORDING TO THE DOGMATIC DECREES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND HER CREEDS OR SYMBOLS OF FAITH

WHAT CHURCH CAN INTERPRET, WITHOUT FEAR OF ERROR, THE TRUTHS OF DIVINE REVELATION?

491. As to the terms "eternal," "everlasting," "endless," "forever and ever," applied in Holy Writ to the sufferings of the wicked, whether they really mean a duration without end, or something else, as certain people insinuate, is a point which only a divinely authorized, infallible teacher can finally decide without fear of error or deception. The determination of this question, in other words, an authentic decision, is so intimately bound up with the entire teaching of divine revelation that it cannot be withheld without throwing doubt on the utility of revelation itself. It is plain that Divine Providence must have furnished a teacher fully competent to safeguard the belief of mankind on the momentous truths which the Lord condescended to reveal to men for their guidance to the attainment of their last happy end. That in the Christian dispensation, the Catholic Church and she alone is the divinely authorized teacher of men, a teacher endowed with doctrinal infallibility, is a truth abundantly demonstrated by Catholic apologists, some of whose chief arguments we have already cited. (See nn. **245, 246, 247.**)

In the Catholic Church, therefore, we find infallibility in teaching and divine authority in commanding; hence her preservation from error in the interpretation of God's word, and in her official function as guide of mankind in the attainment of their last end, eternal salvation.

492. A church that is confessedly fallible can have no claim to be a spiritual society divinely appointed to enable men to reach their end. This shows the huge illusion of our separated brethren, who place their belief and trust in a church that disclaims all power to teach them Christian truth. Such a church, openly professing its incapacity and inability to teach the truth, has no power to bind men's intelligences, and to exact both exterior and interior assent to its teachings. Therefore the reformed church, considered as a teacher, is a nonentity, and has practically no reality except as one of the many secular bodies forming part of civil society, governed by reason alone, well or ill applied by political rulers, as the case may be.

493. Such church bodies felt the necessity of leaning on the secular powers for their well-being and protection, as it is seen

in the established Church of England, the Lutheran Church of Germany, and the schismatic Church of Russia. Rebellion from Rome made them the slaves of civil governments. What would become of such churches if the support of the secular arm were to be withdrawn from them can easily be anticipated. The sects deprived of government support have only their own merits and mutilated creeds to stand upon. Deprived of divine assistance—for God cannot countenance error and rebellion—and abandoned by political rulers, they will sooner or later meet with total disruption, for truth alone can survive the ravages of time. American Protestant sects, offshoots, most of them, of the Anglican Church of England, or of the Lutheran and Presbyterian Church of Germany, Scotland and Switzerland, have long ago shaken off the yoke of slavish allegiance to secular powers and thereby asserted their independence in spiritual affairs, a step certainly in the right direction. To cite one example out of many, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, in its revision of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England in 1801, on reaching Article xxxvii, which granted to her gracious majesty, Queen Elizabeth, full, independent authority in the realm both ecclesiastical and civil, did away with that pretentious usurpation of church right and substituted the following reading, which is in perfect harmony with the doctrine of the Catholic Church on the authority of civil governments:

"Article xxxvii: Of the Power of Civil Magistrates.

"The power of the Civil Magistrate extendeth to all men, as well clergy as laity, in all things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual."

In this country for the mandate of Parliament the voice of the laity has, in large measure, been substituted, as was shown in the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, held in St. Louis, Missouri, in October, 1916. On this occasion the so-called House of Bishops was subjected to a very humiliating scene, when the lay vote completely overrode the will of the clergy, even regarding something so sacred as a sacrament of the Church of Christ. When several years ago the laity were, for the first time, admitted to take part in the deliberations of the episcopal body, Pusey said that the Protestant Episcopal Church of America had, by that act, sounded the death-knell of its spiritual independence from secular interference, and abdicated the right to govern itself in church matters.

CHAPTER IV

THE ATHANASIAN CREED AND PONTIFICAL DEFINITIONS

To ascertain the belief of the Catholic Church on the duration of future punishment, we have but to recall her authorized official teaching as contained in her symbols of faith, the utterances of her Supreme Pontiffs and the dogmatic definitions of her General or Ecumenical Councils.

A. A SYMBOL OF FAITH

494. In the *Quicumque* or Athanasian Creed, attributed by a recent church historian, Henry Brewer, to St. Ambrose, and inserted from the earliest times in the liturgy of both the Oriental and the Western Church, we read the following profession of faith:

"Those who shall have done good things shall go into life eternal, but those who shall have done evil things into eternal fire." [1]

B. PONTIFICAL DEFINITIONS

495. In the formula of faith of Pope Damasus, (A. D. 366) framed against the Priscillian heretics, is contained the following article:

"Christ, Our Lord, will bestow life eternal as the reward of meritorious deeds, and inflict an everlasting penalty in punishment of sin." [2]

The next Papal document is the sanction given by Pope Vigilius (A. D. 540) to an Oriental Synod, which issued the following anathema against Origen and his adherents:

"If any one says or believes that the punishment of demons and impious men is only temporary, and that it will some time come to an end; or that there will be their restoration and redintegration, let him be anathema." [3]

As to these and other individual Papal utterances accepted by the bishops, priests, and their flocks, the faithful, as infallible, it is well to recall here the Decree of the Vatican Council (A. D. 1870) which fully justifies such belief in the Pope's infallibility prevailing in the Universal Church from the apostolic times even to our days.

"The Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex-cathedra*, that is, when in the exercise of his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the whole

[1] D. Enchiridion, pp. 18, 19. [2] Ibid. p. 14. [3] Ibid. p. 89.

Church, is, by reason of the divine assistance promised to him in the person of Blessed Peter, endowed with that infallibility, which the Divine Redeemer wished that His Church should possess in defining a doctrine concerning faith or morals; and that consequently such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are in themselves *ex sese*, irreformable, and not by reason of the consent of the Church." [4]

496. May we conclude from this statement that Ecumenical Councils become unnecessary and practically useless as functional teaching bodies in the Church, since the Pope is invested with divine authority for the pronouncement of infallible decisions on all questions of faith and morals?

As Father D. Palmieri informs us, such consequence cannot be admitted for the following reason: [5] The Roman Pontiff is infallible, not on account of any divine inspiration or revelation regarding the doctrinal or moral points to be defined, but because of the special divine assistance promised to him as successor to St. Peter and Vicar of Christ; an assistance, however, that does not exclude the employment of human means, such as the study of the traditional belief of the Church on the matters to be discussed and defined. For this and other reasons alleged by theologians, the convening of general or Ecumenical Councils may, at times, be not only useful, but necessary.

The belief contained in the creeds and Pontifical documents is likewise found in the manuals of Christian Doctrine sanctioned by either Papal or episcopal authority, such as catechisms or other approved records of Catholic teachings.

It is well known that no book contaminated by heretical doctrines can escape the vigilant eye of the Church and evade condemnation; a fact which admirably contributes to the preservation of the Faith from all erroneous theories.

For this and other reasons the teaching of the Catholic Church on the existence of future punishment and its everlasting duration has been uniform and constant from the times of the Apostles to our own days, and shall remain unchanged even to the crack of doom, the last judgment.

For Christ's promise to His apostles and their legitimate successors must be fully verified, for He said:

"I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay." [6]

[4] Ibid. p. 490. [5] De Romano Pontifice, pp. 598, 666. [6] Luke xxi. 15.

CHAPTER V

ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

497. The term "ecumenical" means "world-wide"; hence, such a Council is one summoned and gathered from the entire Church and enjoying, with its Head, the Pope, supreme authority over the Universal Church. Ecumenical or General Councils, therefore, are those, to which the bishops and other prelates entitled to vote are convoked from the whole world under the presidency of the Supreme Pontiff personally, or of his legates or representatives. The decrees of such an assembly, as an organ of infallible teaching, when sanctioned by Papal authority, are binding on all the members of the Catholic Church. Twenty Ecumenical Councils have been celebrated in Christendom from the first held in the year 325, to the last, assembled in the year 1870, which has been prorogued.

498. For a Council to be ecumenical, and revered as legitimate, possessing therefore a binding force in all its dogmatic decrees, and disciplinary prescriptions, the following five conditions are required, according to the teaching of approved canonists:

I. It must be convoked by the supreme authority of the Church, that of the Sovereign Roman Pontiff held as legitimate successor of St. Peter. The summoning of a General Council is an act of supreme power or jurisdiction, exercised on all the bishops of the Church. Such a power is the exclusive prerogative of the Pope as Head of the Church, successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

If a Council was not summoned by the Roman Pontiff, but by local patriarchs, metropolitans, synods of bishops or by civil rulers it may be ranked as general or ecumenical if its decrees are ultimately approved by the Pope.

Such was the case with the Synod held at Constantinople in the year 381. It was summoned by Theodosius the Great and attended by the four Eastern patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem; and by many metropolitans and bishops of the Eastern Church.

Its decrees, approved by the Roman Pontiff Damasus were also received in the Western Church.[1]

II. All the bishops, though not as yet consecrated, must be officially called to attend such an assembly, although not all need be present. But all the bishops must obey the summons unless legitimately excused, and none can be excluded except by excommunication. Cardinals have the right to be called, though not bishops.

[1] See Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. iv. pp. 424, 425.

III. The Roman Pontiff himself, or, in his absence, his legates or representatives, must preside over the Council's deliberations, with the right of occupying the first place, of prescribing the order to be observed in the transactions, of controlling all disorderly conduct, and with the right of precedence in all official signatures. This condition, however, is not absolutely required, so long as the decrees issued in the absence of Pontifical representation are ultimately sanctioned by the Pope. Such was the case with the First Council of Constantinople held A. D. 381.

IV. Perfect freedom must be allowed to the assembled bishops and prelates to express their views on the matters discussed.

V. The deliberations, definitions, or canons of the Council, even when presided over by Roman legates, must be confirmed and sanctioned by the Roman Pontiff; without his assent and approval they neither possess the privilege of infallibility nor have any binding force on the members of the Church. Though the bishops alone, on account of their episcopal character, possess the inherent right of sitting in the Councils as judges with the power of deliberating and voting on the matters discussed, yet the Sovereign Pontiff may communicate to non-episcopal prelates the needed jurisdiction for taking part in the discussions and deliberations of the conciliar assemblies. Theologians and canonists that may be called have only the consultive or advisory vote.

The Fourth Lateran Council under Pope Innocent III (A. D. 1215), issued the following definition as an article of Catholic faith:

"All men shall rise with their own bodies, which they have here in life, to receive either good or evil things, according to their works, either everlasting glory with Christ or eternal punishment with the devil." [2]

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF THE EASTERN OR ORIENTAL SCHISMATIC CHURCHES ON THE *DURATION* OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT

499. As indicated by the heading, we do not treat in this chapter of the belief on the matter at issue of the United Eastern Church. This Church, though having a particular liturgy and some special disciplinary customs, constitutes a part of the Latin or Roman Catholic Church, being in communion with the center of unity and jurisdiction, the Roman See. On this account, its bishops, the clergy, and their flocks, hold and profess the Catho-

[2] D. Enchiridion, p. 189.

lic Faith on all doctrinal points, and consequently also on the dogmatic truth of the eternal reward of the just, and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

Hence our discussion is here limited to the Eastern Schismatic Churches, whose belief on the duration of infernal pains we are about to investigate.

500. The Oriental Schismatic Church may be thus divided:

First, into the Church of the Russian Empire, now a republic.

Secondly, into that which is comprised within the Turkish domain.

Thirdly, into the Church of the Kingdom of Greece.

Though there exist other portions of Schismatic Churches under different civil rulers, yet the principal divisions are the three that we have mentioned.

501. It is sometimes asserted that the Catholic doctrine on the future state differs essentially from that of the Eastern Schismatic Church. But it is gratifying to know that, as to the existence and duration of the punishment of the wicked, the teaching of the Schismatic Churches is in complete agreement with that of the Latin Catholic Church.

This is shown in what is called the Orthodox Confession of the Eastern Church adopted for all Russian Schismatic subjects and approved by the four Eastern patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. It became in fact the authorized official creed of the entire Greek and Russian Churches. This document was sanctioned, in three successive Synods held in the years 1642, 1643 and 1672.

In this confession, to the question, "What is to be thought of those who die at enmity with God?" the following answer is given: "Some will be chastised with heavier, some with lighter punishments, but all forever, according to the Scripture."[1] Moreover, the Orthodox Catechism, placed in the hands of the faithful, answering the question as to the locality of those souls, which depart from their bodies at enmity with God, speaks thus: "This place is designated as hell, into which the devil was thrust, eternal fire and exterior darkness."

Another more recent document is "The Full Catechism of the Orthodox Eastern Church," drawn up by Philaret, the Metropolitan of Moscow, approved by the so-called Holy Governing Synod, and published for the use of schools, and of all Orthodox Christians by order of the Czar in 1839. It also received the unanimous approval of the four Eastern patriarchs mentioned above, and must therefore be taken as an authoritative standard of the belief of the whole Græco-Russian Church of our times.

Question 383 is expressed in these terms:

"What will be the lot of unbelievers and transgressors?"

[1] Luke xii. 47, 48.

"They will be given over to everlasting death, that is to everlasting fire with the devils." Then follow references to Apoc. xx. 14, 15; Matt. xxv. 41, 46, and Mark ix. 42, 47.

502. The preceding and the following statements of the Faith of the Eastern Schismatic Church, are taken from the "Creeds of Christendom" by Prof. Philip Schaff, New York, 1877:

"As the devils are condemned to eternal punishment, therefore they will never become partakers of divine grace and mercy."[2] (Matt. xxv. 41.)

"On the judgment day each one will receive his everlasting retribution according to his merits or demerits." The wicked will hear that most sad sentence: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire."[3] (Matt. xxv. 34, 41; Mark ix. 42, 47.)

"What is to be believed of those who die in sin?"

"They will all be tormented by eternal pains, more or less, according to the degree of their guilt."[4] (Luke xii. 47, 48.)

"The bodies of the wicked will be immortal, for they are condemned to endure eternal pains."[5]

As Cardinal Newman pertinently observes, "this consent between Rome and the Schismatic Church is a stronger proof of doctrine than any other, for it is a consent maintained through ages in spite of division and antagonism in the communions maintaining it."[6]

For further details on this subject see "Catholic Eschatology and Universalism," by Henry N. Oxenham, to whose learned work we are indebted for many thoughts and valuable suggestions.

CHAPTER VII

THE TESTIMONIES OF THE GREEK AND LATIN FATHERS ON THE ETERNITY OF HELL AND ITS TORMENTS

A. PRELIMINARY NOTIONS

503. By "Fathers of the Church" are understood those ecclesiastical writers of old, who, on account of their learning and holiness have been recognized and revered as men of great authority in the interpretation, exposition, and defense of God's word, as registered in Holy Scripture or contained in apostolic traditions. Those only are reckoned as Fathers of the Church in whom the following four conditions are verified.

1. *Antiquity.* That is, living within a period enclosed between the apostolic age and the generally admitted termination

[2] Orthodox Confession, vol. ii. p. 299. [3] Ibid. pp. 338–339.
[4] Ibid. p. 342. [5] Ibid. p. 396. [6] Via Media, vol. i. p. 50, note.

of the patristic epoch about the year 636, for the West, and the year 754, for the East. According to this view of Church historians and canonists, St. Isidore of Seville is held as the last of the Latin, and St. John Damascene as the last of the Greek Fathers.

2. *Ecclesiastical learning and orthodox doctrine.* This condition evidently excludes heterodox, heretical writers, whose authority is therefore limited to their testimony to such truths as are admitted by the Church. To this latter category belong Tertullian and Origen, who, notwithstanding some of their erroneous doctrines, may be sometimes opportunely quoted as witnesses of apostolic traditions.

3. *Holiness of life.* This condition is absolutely required, for those only may be rightly revered as Fathers of the Church, who promote and foster the spiritual life of the faithful, both by their writings and their examples.

4. *Approbation of Mother Church.* This approbation she grants either implicitly, or explicitly to such as are commonly recognized as reliable witnesses to the divine traditions, and authoritative exponents of her doctrines. Among the ecclesiastical writers some have been honored by the Church with the title of Doctor on account of their eminent learning and sanctity of life. For the conferring of such dignity the condition of antiquity is not required, as the Church may at all times bestow it on such of her sons as are celebrated for piety and sacred knowledge.

504. What value, then, should we set on the testimony of such distinguished men? Our answer is that the agreement or consensus of the Fathers of the Church on matters of faith and morals furnishes complete certainty and commands assent, because they as a body, bear witness to the belief and teaching of the infallible Church, whom they practically represent. Here we must, however, observe that such an agreement or consensus need not be absolute, as a moral unity suffices to make it authoritative. Thus, in some cases, whilst a large majority of the Fathers may bear witness to a doctrine as divinely revealed, others either may not clearly express their view, or as it frequently happens, they may not professedly treat of it in their writings, though they do not advance any proposition positively opposed to some given point of doctrine.

Hence, theologians unanimously assert that he who rejects the common testimony of the Holy Fathers on any dogmatic or moral question, rejects by that fact the authority of the Universal Church herself, for their morally unanimous testimony forms an incontestable proof of her doctrinal belief and teaching handed down by tradition, of which they are most reliable channels and witnesses.[1]

It is hardly necessary to remark that the testimony of one or

[1] See Vatican Council Const. de Fide. D. Enchiridion, p. 415.

a few Fathers that happens to be opposed to that of the majority of them, does not, by any means, justify us in preferring it to the authority of the latter. For this reason, on the question of the future state of children dying without baptism, we set aside, *salva reverentia,* the rigid opinion especially of St. Fulgentius.

For a fuller development of these preliminary notions see "Manual of Patrology," by Rev. Bernard Schmid, O. S. B., whose views we have here condensed. See also "Patrology, the Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Church," by Otto Bardenhewer, D.D., translated from the Second German Edition by Right Rev. Thomas J. Shahan, D.D., Rector of the Catholic University.

B. QUOTATIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE FATHERS

505. As we did previously, to economize space and time, we shall reproduce in full only the principal passages bearing on our subject, and refer to other passages by simple citations of other works of the same writer.

Ours are all bona-fide quotations, which may be verified by resorting to their sources, which are as follows:

a. The Migne Collections of Latin and Greek Fathers.

b. "What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment, in reply to Dr. Farrar's challenge in his 'Eternal Hope,'" by the Rev. E. R. Pusey, D.D.

c. "The Faith of Catholics," new edition by the late Msgr. Capel.

d. "Enchiridion Patristicum," Auctore M. J. Rouet de Journel, S. J. From this last very valuable collection we have taken a number of quotations cited there on p. 870, n. 594, under the caption: "The Torments of the Damned are Eternal."

1. St. Clement of Rome, Pope and Martyr (d. 107):

"If we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest; but if otherwise we should disobey His commandments, then nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment,"[2]

2. St. Ignatius Martyr, bishop of Antioch, disciple of St. John the Evangelist (d. 107):

"Err not, my brethren, those defiled by evil teachings and evil doings will go into the unquenchable fire."[3]

3. St. Justin, Philosopher and Martyr (d. 163):

"We Christians believe that all who live wickedly, and do not repent, will be punished in eternal fire."[4]

4. St. Polycarp, Martyr, Bishop of Smyrna (d. 169):

In answer to the Roman Proconsul's threat that he should be burned, he said: "With fire which burns for a short time, and then is extinguished, thou dost threaten me; but dost thou not

[2] Homily, Epist. ad Corinth, x, n. 7, p. 383. Lightfoot.

[3] Epist. ad Ephesios, n. 16. [4] Apolog. xxi. 17, and i. 8, 28.

know of the fire of the future judgment, and of the eternal punishment reserved to the ungodly?"[5] (See n. **515.**)

5. St. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (d. 186):

"To those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek immortality, the Lord will give life everlasting, joy, peace, rest, and abundance of good things, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. But to the unbelievers and despisers, who obey not the truth, when they shall have been filled with adulteries and fornications, there shall be anger and wrath, and, at the last, everlasting fire shall possess such men."[6]

6. St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul (d. 202):

"That eternal fire is prepared for those who should transgress, both the Lord openly affirmed in the Gospel and the other Scriptures prove."[7]

506. 7. Origen, eminent Biblical scholar (d. 230):

We shall, further on (Part IX), speak at some length of this remarkable man, and of his deplorable errors regarding the condition of the lost in the future world. We, however, quote him here as a witness to the dogma of hell's eternity, because some of his biographers hold that in some parts of his voluminous writings Origen asserted and defended the orthodox doctrine concerning the eternal duration of both the happiness of the blessed, and the torments of the wicked.

I here quote one of such orthodox passages taken from the *Enchiridion Patristicum,* page 188:

"When the soul shall have departed from this world, it will receive what it has merited, that is, the inheritance of eternal life and beatitude, if its actions deserved it. Or it will be consigned to eternal fire and torments, if the guilt of its crimes caused it to merit such punishment."

8. St. Hippolytus, Bishop and Martyr (d. 235):

"By Christ's judicial decision to those who have done well, shall be righteously assigned eternal bliss; and to the lovers of iniquity shall be given eternal punishment. And the fire, which is unquenchable, and without end, awaits these latter. Both men and angels and demons, shall utter one voice, saying: 'Righteous is Thy judgment.'"[8]

9. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage and Martyr (d. 258):

Referring to the contrast between the brief trials of time and the endless sufferings of eternity, he writes: "Having before my eyes the fear of God and eternal punishment in unquenchable fire, more than the fear of man and brief suffering."[9]

We cannot omit this additional striking passage penned by the same intrepid Bishop and Martyr:

[5] Acts of the Martyrs, by Ruinart. Epist. ad Philipp., ii, 3.
[6] Ad Autolycum, i, 14. Edinburg translation.
[7] Adversus Haereses ii, 28, p. 1790, Oxford Edition.
[8] Bibl. Patrum, ii, 451.
[9] Epist. viii, n. 2, Oxford Translation.

"The ever-burning Gehenna, and the pain caused by the devouring flames, will torment the lost; neither shall there be any respite or end. The souls and their bodies will permanently endure and suffer intense pains. Then all repentance will be fruitless, and useless all lamentation and supplication. Those that refuse to believe in eternal life will believe, when too late, in eternal punishment." [10]

10. St. Methodius, Bishop of Olympus and Martyr (d. 303):

He introduces Susanna saying to the elders, her tempters: [11] "It is much better for me to die than betray to you adulterers the bed of my husband, and to suffer eternal punishment from the fiery wrath of God." [12]

11. Lactantius, Christian Apologist (d. 312):

"If the soul, which has its origin from God, gains the mastery, it lives in perpetual light. If, on the other hand, the body shall overpower the soul, and subject it to its dominion, it will be in everlasting darkness and death. And the force of this is not that it altogether annihilates the souls of the unrighteous, but that it subjects them to everlasting punishment. We term that punishment the second death, which is itself also perpetual, as also is immortality. We thus define the second death. It is the suffering of eternal pains; or, it is the condemnation of souls for their deserts to eternal punishments." [13]

This testimony alone suffices to demolish the annihilation theory, based on the false interpretation of Apocalypse, ch. xxi, 8. "Which is the second death."

An appropriate remark on this point is found in Part IX.

12. St. Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria (d. 372):

After describing the true believers in Christ and the pharisaical hypocrites, he concludes: "According to the words of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." [14]

13. St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers in Gaul (d. 367):

"The Lord will appoint the portion of the wicked man with the hypocrites in an eternity of punishment. An eternity of the body is destined for the heathen too, so that there shall be in them eternal matter for the eternal fire, and in all their being [that is, in both soul and body] everlasting punishment shall be put in force."

Such is the comment of this illustrious writer on the text of Job: "He [the wicked man] shall be punished for all that he did, and yet shall not be consumed." [15]

14. St. Ephræm, renowned and voluminous Syrian writer (d. 378):

[10] Ad Demetrianum. See Enchiridion Patr. pp. 232–233.
[11] Dan. xiii. 23.
[12] Orat. xi, Bibl. Patrum, iii, 702.
[13] Divinarum Institutionum, lib. ii, n. 13.
[14] Matt. xxv. 46. Epist. iv. ad Serap.
[15] Job xx. 18; St. Hilary in Matt. c. xxv, n. 2, and ch. v, n. 12.

"The fire, which is unquenchable, not consuming what it devoureth, was not appointed to consume but to cause suffering and agony and this forever, as it is written." [16]

15. St. Zeno, eighth Bishop of Verona, Italy (d. 383):

"Now we ought to know that the just are destined to perpetual life, and the ungodly to eternal punishment." [17]

16. St. Basil the Great, Bishop and Doctor (d. 379):

"Perhaps more fearful than the darkness and the eternal fire is that shame which sinners will have as their companion in eternity, as a dye which cannot be washed out, abiding forever in the memory of their souls. There is no liberation from these things after death, nor any device or means of escaping the quenchless fire of that bitter prison." [18]

17. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan and Doctor (d. 396):

Addressing a stubborn, impenitent Manichean he says: "Since thou thinkest that thou wert created by the devil, hasten then to his abode, where is the fire and sulphur; where his conflagration is not extinguished, lest his punishment should ever end." [19]

18. St. Jerome, Priest and Doctor (d. 420):

He emphasizes Our Lord's words: "These [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting." "Observe that the punishment of the wicked is eternal and that the perpetual life of the blessed has no fear thereafter of being destroyed." [20] He thus brands the error of Origen on the final deliverance of the demons and the reprobates from hell. "Let us cast this heresy from our minds; and let us remember that sinners in the Gospel are thrown into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for it is written: 'Their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be extinguished.'" [21]

19. Rufinus, Priest of Aquileia (d. 410):

"The bodies, which shall rise from the dead, will be incorruptible and immortal, not those of the just only, but also those of sinners. Of the just, that they may abide forever with Christ; of sinners that, without perishing, they may undergo the penalty due to them." [22]

507. 20. St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople and Doctor (d. 398):

His teaching on the eternal duration of future punishment is so full, and so frequently and earnestly repeated that no other Father or writer of the Church can compare with him in this respect. But we must confine ourselves to the two following quotations:

"Grievous punishments await the workers of iniquity; even

[16] Serm. Exeget in Script. [17] Lib. ii, Tract. xxi.
[18] In Psalm xxxiii. et Epist. 46. [19] De Fide, ii. 13, p. 119.
[20] Comment in Mat. xxv. 46. [21] On Jonas iii. [22] De Symb., n. 45.

a pool of fire, a worm that dieth not, darkness interminable, and endless tortures." [23]

In another Homily he thus addresses his hearers:

"I know I am paining you by speaking of hell. But what can I do? I must speak of hell to save you from falling into it. The exaggerated view of God's mercy, to the disparagement of His justice, is the devil's language. The denial of hell is Satan's reasoning to draw men into it." [24]

21. St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in Africa and Doctor (d. 396):

As we learn from his writings, St. Augustine undertook the task of proving the eternity of hell both from Holy Scripture and tradition. He also counteracted the view that all Christians, at least, can be practically certain of their final salvation, even if they lead bad lives. He held that eternal punishment would overtake every one who did not depart this life in the friendship of God. The orthodox teaching of both the Eastern and the Western Fathers stemmed the tide of Origenistic speculations, so that the whole eschatology remained where Augustine had left it. And as he left it, so do we find it to-day. Next to St. John Chrysostom, no other Latin or Greek Father spoke so often and so forcibly as this most eminent Doctor on the dogma of everlasting retribution. "There are indeed different degrees of punishment among the lost, as of glory among the saved; but next to the eternity of punishment, perpetual separation from God is by far the greatest torment." [25]

22. Victor of Antioch (d. 402):

Commenting on Mark ix. 47; "and the fire is not extinguished," he writes: "As the fire which burns sinners is elsewhere called 'eternal,' [26] so it is here called 'quenchless.'" He held distinctly that by the undying worm is meant the ceaseless remorse of conscience afflicting the reprobates.

23. St. Isidore of Pelusium, Abbot (d. 412):

"If you neither long for the everlasting life with Christ, nor dread the judgment of the eternal flame, you either vie in contempt with the demons, or are irrational men, destitute of any sense of fear." [27]

24. St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria and Doctor (d. 412):

After speaking of the many helps of divine grace placed within the sinners' reach for their conversion, he reminds them of the consequences of their obstinacy: "They will be numbered among those of whom the Scripture says: 'Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.'" [28]

25. St. Maximus, Bishop of Turin (d. 422):

Expounding St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 4, 5, 6), he

[23] Homily xi, on 1 Cor.
[24] Homily xii, ad Ephesios.
[25] De Civitate Dei, passim.
[26] Matt. xxv. 41.
[27] Epistol, 223.
[28] Comm. on St. John.

writes: "No one falls more grievously than he who having heard the word of God turns to sins, on account of which eternal punishments are prepared." [29]

26. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus in Syria (d. 458):

"Immortal is the fruition of the just and the punishment of sinners." [30]

27. St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna (d. 433):

"We believe in eternal life, because after the resurrection there is no end either of good for the blessed or of ill for the reprobates." [31]

28. St. Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor (d. 440):

"The just shall be separated from the unjust, the innocent from the guilty. By the condemnation of the Almighty Judge the wicked shall be sent into the fire prepared for the torments of the devil and his angels,[32] to have community of punishment with those whose will they chose to do. Who then would not be in terror of that lot of eternal tortures? Who would not fear ills never to be ended?" [33]

29. Salvian, Priest of Marseilles (d. 440):

Like a new Jeremias he denounced in words of burning eloquence the prevailing vices of his time as the cause of the divine displeasures and anger, and the source of public calamities.

"Guilty, faithless man, when thou shalt go forth out of this life, the Holy Judgment Seat awaits thee. There thou shalt encounter the avenging angels, and the terrible ministers of endless torments. When does man kindle for himself eternal fire? When he first begins to sin. When does he give strength to the fire and increase its violence? When he heaps sins upon sins. When will he enter the eternal fire? When by the excess of his increasing sins he shall have filled up the irremediable sum of all ills, as the Saviour said to the scribes and Pharisees, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers." [34]

30. St. Cæsarius, Archbishop of Arles (d. 502):

"Again and again I entreat you, dearest brethren, let us both consider the eternal joy of the just after slight toil, and fear the endless punishment of sinners after a passing gladness." [35]

31. St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe in Numidia (d. 507):

"When the unchangeable sentence of Christ, the Just Judge, shall have been pronounced, all the wicked shall go to eternal burning, but the just to life eternal; the wicked to burn forever with the devil, and the righteous to reign forever with Christ." [36]

32. St. John Damascene, celebrated for his polemical writings against the Manicheans (d. 754):

He is looked upon as an authentic witness to the doctrine of

[29] Tract. I, de Baptismo. [30] In Isaiam lxv. 20.
[31] Serm. lx. [32] Matt. xxv. 41. [33] Sermo ix. De Collectis.
[34] Matt. xxiii. 32. Serm. De Gubern, Dei. l. iv.
[35] Hom. xiii. [36] De Fide ad Petrum, c. xliii.

the Greek Church, from the apostolic age to his own times.

"We shall rise again, and our souls will again be united to their bodies, which shall then be incorruptible, and shall appear before the awful tribunal of Christ. The devil and the demons, Antichrist and the ungodly shall be plunged into the everlasting fire. But they who have done good shall shine forth as the sun with the angels, and enjoy life everlasting with our Lord Jesus Christ." [37]

508. 33. St. Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor (d. 604): "The impious man atones in torments also for the sinful desires which he entertained. Given over to the avenging flames he is not consumed and put an end to by death, for then all pain would cease along with his life. But in order that he may be perpetually tormented, he is compelled to live forever in pain. For as his life in this world was dead in sin, so the spiritual death shall always live there. Sinners wished to live forever, that they might forever persevere in their iniquities. Therefore, they desire also to live, in order that they may sin so long as they live. The justice then of the exacting judge requires that those, who, in this life never wished to refrain from sin, should never be free from punishment, and that there should be no termination of chastisement for the impious men, because they did not wish to cease from sin, so long as they had the power to commit it." [38]

Much weight is added to the argument of the holy Doctor if taken in connection with the famous saying of Christ recorded in St. Mark's Gospel, chapter iii. verse 29: "He that shall sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, but shall become guilty of an eternal sin." This is exemplified in the sad attitude of such sinners as refuse the grace of repentance even to the bitter end, and carry with them to Christ's tribunal the canker of mortal sin. We fail to see any injustice in the punishment that lasts as long as the sin, that is, forever.[39]

Moreover, all remission of mortal sin, which takes place in this life, is due to the merits of Christ operating on penitent souls through the sacraments, which He instituted for that purpose. But the application of these merits for the forgiveness of mortal sin is restricted to the present life, the time of probation; hence, they cannot be applied to the damned. Therefore, their sin remains forever unforgiven, and is consequently forever justly punished. For this reason, St. Bernard treating of this very point says: "*Semper puniri poterit, quod non potest expiari.*"—"There is no wrong in punishing forever, what can never be expiated, atoned for by penance." [40]

[37] De Fide, l. iv. 27. [38] See Enchiridion Patr. pp. 811, 812.

[39] A similar argument is found in the Summa of St. Thomas Contra Gentiles, Lib. iii. c. 144.

[40] See St. Thomas, Supplem. q. xcix, art. 1, 2, 3, 4.

The same holy Pontiff, in his comments on the Book of Job, quotes the following text of that holy prophet:

"He [the impious man] shall be punished for all that he did, and yet shall not be consumed." [41]

"This means that he is tormented, but not destroyed; he dies, and yet lives; he fails and still subsists; he seems always to end, and yet his life never ends. If these things are so terrible only in hearing them, what will they be to the reprobates, that have to suffer them?" [42]

We close here our quotations from the Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers, which cover the first seven centuries of the Christian Era.

CHAPTER VIII

AN UNBROKEN CHAIN OF WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH OF ENDLESS FUTURE RETRIBUTION

509. We have seen in the preceding chapter the series of testimonies to the dogma of hell's eternity. Beginning from the apostolic age it reaches, without interruption, the eighth century of the Christian Era. Here we ask: Has this series of witnesses been broken and ceased to assert God's revealed truth? No; by no means. It has been faithfully kept up and continued by a galaxy of Catholic historians, canonists, and theologians who, both by their teachings in the leading universities and episcopal seminaries of Europe and by their writings expounded, illustrated, and defended the dogmas of the Catholic Church, and thus admirably contributed to preserve the Faith in all its purity and integrity.

It must be interesting for Catholics to know who were the most conspicuous writers from the eighth to the sixteenth century, whose learned works approved by the Church, bear testimony to the truth we are vindicating.

510. They are the following, listed in the order of their lifetime, that is, in chronological order:

1. Flaccus Alcuin (755).
2. Paulinus of Aquileia (780).
3. Rabanus Maurus (847).
4. Remigius, Archbishop of London (893).
5. Odo, Abbot of Cluny (942).
6. St. Peter Damian (1057).
7. Lanfrancus, Archbishop of Canterbury (1090).
8. St. Bruno, Founder of the Carthusians (1101).
9. St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1109).

[41] Job xx. 18. [42] Moral. xv. n. 21.

10. St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux (1126).
11. Peter Lombard, Archbishop of Paris, the famous Magister Sententiarum (1145).
12. Richard of St. Victor (1173).
13. St. Albert the Great (1240).
14. St. Bonaventure (1274).
15. St. Thomas Aquinas, surnamed the Angelic Doctor (1274).
16. Duns Scotus (1308).
17. Nicholas Lyranus (1320).
18. John Tauler (1361).
19. John Gerson (1363).
20. Cardinal Peter Alliacensis (1396).
21. Cardinal Nicholas Cusan (1401).
22. Dionysius Carthusianus (1403).
23. Leonard de Rubeis (1405).
24. St. Bernardine of Siena (1438).
25. Cardinal Bessarion (1440).
26. Alphonsus Tostatus (1455).
27. St. Laurence Justinian, Patriarch of Venice (1455).
28. Gabriel Biel (1495).
29. Franciscus Ferrariensis (1502).
30. Cardinal Thomas Cajetan (1510).
31. Blessed John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester and Martyr (1520).
32. Frederick Staphylus (1564).

For the above complete list of ecclesiastical writers from the year 755 to the year 1564, we are indebted to the *Enchiridion Sacrarum Disciplinarum*, Auctore Zepherino Zitelli.

Most of the preceding writers composed works which involved the discussion of future retribution. Hence, if space permitted it, it would be very easy to show from their writings the orthodox traditional doctrine on the eternity of both the happiness of the blessed and of the punishment of the reprobates.

511. To know the zeal, energy, ardor, and, I might say, the enthusiasm with which all the branches of religious knowledge and spiritual science have been cultivated under the inspiration and auspices of the Catholic Church from the twelfth century to our own times, we need but call to mind the astounding fact that from the year 1109 to the year 1894 there flourished within her fold as many as 12,208 writers. This statement the reader can easily verify by consulting a most valuable work of Father H. Hurter, S. J. I mean the *Nomenclator Literarius*, in four volumes, in which the indefatigable author gives us, as the result of his labors, a complete history of Catholic theology, and its allied branches from the year 1109, when theological studies began to be systematically pursued, to the year 1894, the date of publication of that most creditable and useful production.

Is there anything outside the Catholic Church that can com-

pare with this brilliant array of writers, whose works, filling the libraries of the civilized world of both hemispheres, cover the whole field of ecclesiastical learning, such as Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Canon Law, Sacred Scripture, Ascetics, Church History, Christian Archeology and other branches? *Confingant quidquam tale adversarii nostri si valent.*

512. But here the reader will naturally ask us what kind of testimony do the numerous authors mentioned above bear to the question at issue; namely, the endless duration of the infernal regions and their miserable inhabitants, whether fallen angels, or reprobate human creatures?

Here is the answer: In the first place, by far the largest number of those writers, as their still extant works prove, have professedly treated that very question and solved it in an orthodox sense, as it is rightly expected from all Catholic authors, whose sacred duty is, in matters of faith, to conform their teaching to that of their infallible, heaven-appointed guide, the Catholic Church.

Secondly: As to those writers who may not have had occasion to treat *ex professo* of this dogma of divine revelation in their writings, we are certain that they also may be reckoned, at least, as indirect witnesses to that dogmatic truth, for they neither doubted or denied it. Moreover, if they had acted otherwise, their heretical statements could not escape the vigilant eye of God's Church, and their names would find no place in a thoroughly Catholic work, like Hurter's *Nomenclator,* published after due revision, and with the full approval of the Church authorities.

CHAPTER IX

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRISTIAN MARTYRS ON THE TRUTH OF EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

513. St. Augustine in his explanation of Psalm xxxiv, verse 23, "My God and my Lord, arise and heed my cause"; makes some reflections suitable to our present subject. "The Psalmist," writes the holy Doctor, "does not say 'heed my sufferings,' or 'the persecution I endure,' but 'my cause.' For sufferings may be common both to the just and to the wicked. Therefore, it is not pain that makes martyrdom, but the cause or motive for which it is undergone." And in his comments on Christ's Sermon on the Mount, developing the same thought, he writes: "The Lord did not simply say: 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution,'[1] but He added 'for justice sake,' for where there is

[1] Matt. v. 10.

not the true Faith there cannot be justice, that is, a just cause." Hence, if some one who submits to tortures is moved by any worldly or sinful motive, such as pride, obstinacy, vain glory, and the like, or does so to show his tenacity in maintaining some individual, private opinion in matters of doctrine, he is no candidate for martyrdom in the sense held by the Catholic Church. Moreover, it is not a sound Catholic principle to hold that no one generally dies save for truth, for it is a historical fact that numbers of heretics have exhibited a certain amount of courage in dying for erroneous doctrines.

For this reason we have no right to term every man a martyr who dies for an opinion.

Etymologically a martyr is a witness. Now, we cannot be witnesses of simple views, but only of facts and of doctrines logically springing from them. This was what Christ meant when He said to His disciples: "You shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth."[2] The martyrs, then, were witnesses not to an opinion, but to a fact, the Christian fact, the existence and heavenly origin of the religion of Jesus Christ. Some had witnessed its beginning, and were thoroughly acquainted with its Founder; their hands, as St. John the Evangelist expressed it, "Had handled the Word of Life."[3] The others knew of the same fact by a living, uninterrupted tradition, of which the links were as yet few and easily verifiable. Others, again, though living at a somewhat remoter age, were fully aware of the provision made by Jesus Christ for the preservation of the doctrine of His Gospel from error and corruption, by founding His Church, the visible and universal witness to God's truth, indivisible in her unity, indefectible in her life, infallible in her voice, and divine in the authority she possessed. The martyrs, then, in dying for Christ, bore witness to all the truths, which He permanently teaches mankind through His authentic representative, the Church. For these reasons between the death of the martyrs in testimony to the above facts, and the death of heretics, who refused to renounce a new opinion, utterly at variance with those divinely established facts, no comparison whatever is possible. Even though determination and courage were equal on both sides, the value of the testimony would be altogether different; only believers united to God's Church by faith and charity would have the right to be styled witnesses and Christian martyrs. Thus Pascal's dictum is quite correct. He does not say, "I believe every man who is slain for a doctrine"; but, with his usual almost mathematical precision, he says, "I believe those facts, the witnesses of which allow themselves to be slain." That the language of Pascal is here perfectly correct appears also from the following terms used by the Fathers of the Vatican

[2] Acts i. 8. [3] 1 John i. 1.

Council: "In order that the obedience of faith might be in harmony with reason, God willed that to the interior help of the Holy Spirit, should be joined exterior proofs of His Revelation, to wit: *Divine Facts* and especially miracles and prophecies."[4]

In the light of these principles, we fully grasp the meaning of St. Paul when he says: "If I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."[5] This would be what commentators call a material, but not a formal, meritorious martyrdom.[6]

514. The strongest evidence of the sincere faith of the martyrs in their confession is the fact of the dreadful sufferings which they had to undergo. They were condemned to die, according to the whim of the magistrates, either on the ignominous wood of the cross, a punishment at first reserved for slaves, or by beheading, or being burned alive, frozen to death, quartered, strangled, drowned; or by being immersed in boiling oil, or pitch, or molten lead, or quicklime; or by being roasted on a grill or red hot iron bed; at other times, they were thrown to the beasts, enclosed in sacks with poisonous serpents, or shut up in dark dungeons to be devoured by rats, which found in them the only food for their voracious, maddened hunger. It is impossible to read without a thrill of emotion of the agonies suffered by the confessors of Christ, and these we find narrated not in legendary stories, but in authentic documents still preserved in the archives of Christendom. They are authenticated reports of the judicial processes, which in the Roman empire had to be faithfully recorded, copies of which industrious Christian writers managed to secure.[7]

The testimony, which they continued to bear with unshaken fortitude, even to the shedding of their blood, was the result at once of their faith, their reason, and their virtue. Even the heathens accepted its convincing force, when they enrolled themselves in the ranks of such heroes under the banner of Christ, drawn thereto by the mere sight of the confessors of the Faith, recognizing in their indomitable courage an irrefragable witness and proof of the truth and divinity of the religion that inspired it. St. Justin, himself a martyr, writes that it was the brave death of the Christians that converted him.[8] Their utterances were as calm as they were eloquent, for they spoke them when confronting death, on the very threshold of eternity. The narratives of their sufferings and their sayings in those crucial moments, faithfully recorded by their surviving fellow-Christians, under the guidance of the Church, are fully authenticated, be-

[4] D. Enchiridion, p. 476. [5] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

[6] See ten lectures on the martyrs by the late Paul Allard, English version.

[7] See Fromby's History of the Early Church for full description of the many instruments of martyrdom. [8] Apologia Relig. Christ.

ing extracted, most of them, from the judicial processes, as the laws of the Roman Empire required that they should be carefully registered and reported to the imperial authorities.

515. In a previous chapter I alluded to the fact that we are living in a critical age; hence the necessity of resorting in our citations to authentic, genuine, reliable documents. Fully convinced of this condition and exigency of our times, I brought no testimony of any martyr whose authenticity could not be demonstrated. In this respect my task was comparatively easy, as I availed myself of the patient, conscientious labors of the distinguished Benedictine scholar, Theodore Ruinart (d. 1709), who devoted several years of his laborious life to the collection and authentication of a large number of the narratives of the early Christian martyrs and of the speeches they addressed to their persecutors in the solemn hour of their execution. The "Catholic Encyclopedia,"[9] designates him as one of the most eminent church historians and critics of his time. Hurter, in his *Nomenclator*,[10] says of his chief work on the early martyrs, that it is full of solid erudition, and remarkable for his sober criticism. The sayings that we shall quote as having been uttered by the martyrs are the more remarkable because they come from individuals of every class of society. We reckon among them men and women of noble birth, men and women of the middle and laborer's class, boys and girls, merchants, scholars, soldiers. Every nation contributed its share of heroic witnesses to the Catholic Faith; Greece, Rome, West Africa, Egypt, Persia, Scythia, Spain, Italy, Gaul, and other countries too numerous to mention, counted their martyrs by the thousands.

516. The shrewd pagans, bent on destroying Christianity, selected as their victims particularly bishops and priests, thinking that, by doing away with the shepherds, their flocks would soon be scattered. But they were baffled in their wicked attempt, for multitudes of new pastors soon replaced their martyred predecessors, thereby showing that the power of Christ was rendering His loyal servants absolutely unconquerable. Tertullian's saying was literally verified, "*Sanguis martyrum semen Christianorum.*"—"The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians." This is the language of the African apologist to the imperial persecutors: "Torment, torture, burn us alive; your iniquity is the best proof of our innocence. Our virgin maidens fear more the place of turpitude where you threaten to send them than the lions and tigers of the arena, for to them the loss of purity is a more atrocious pain than the most cruel death."[11] But Christ, for whose sake they were ready to die, added the crown of virginity to that of martyrdom on behalf of millions of His loyal spouses.

[9] Vol. xiii. p. 222.
[10] Vol. ii. p. 795.
[11] Enchiridion Patr., p. 127, n. 285.

In the words of Doctor Pusey, the animating, constraining principle was the love of Christ, who had died for them.

To the tyrant who had condemned him to the funeral pile, thus bravely spoke St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna: "For eighty-six years I am Christ's servant; how can I blaspheme my King, who died to save me?"

The brief words which the martyrs spoke in those crucial moments, often referring to the fire that shall never be extinguished, were mostly called forth by the threats of their judges and persecutors, and they express in their simple, earnest language the deeply rooted conviction of those who uttered them. Now, these heroic witnesses being found in every part of the Church of Christ, and representing every class of persons, noble and plebeian, learned and illiterate, rich and poor, old and young, attest the faith of all classes of Christians in the terrific truth of everlasting punishment, to avoid which they did not shrink from the most excruciating torments that satanic ingenuity could suggest and human cruelty inflict.

In the admirable language of the Holy Martyrs we see literally fulfilled the promise made by our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Martyrs, in His Gospel. He said: "They will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors and before kings for My sake. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how, or what to speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak."[12] "The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you must say."[13]

These were the precise words quoted by St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr, in addressing her executioners, as related in the Lessons of the second nocturn for December 13, her feast.

We need not then be surprised if our theologians and apologists reckon the testimony of martyrs as one of the strongest evidences of the divinity of the Christian religion, which recognizes them as the witnesses of its truth.[14]

CHAPTER X

LIST OF MARTYRS AND RECORD OF THEIR DYING WORDS

For the testimony of the three early martyrs, St. Ignatius, St. Justin, and St. Polycarp, see n. 505.

St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna and himself a martyr (d.

[12] Matt. x. 17, 18, 19. [13] Luke xii. 12.

[14] See S. Schiffini, S.J., De Vera Religione, his posthumous work, pp. 126–133. Siena, 1908. For a very graphic picture of the fortitude of martyrs, see Newman's Grammar of Assent, pp. 471–478.

156), wrote as follows in one of his epistles: "The martyrs, bearing in mind the grace received from Christ, despised the torments of one hour's duration, which were to save them from eternal pains. Fire appeared to them refreshing, when they thought of the fire that is eternal and shall never be extinguished. They were also encouraged to suffer patiently by considering the goods reserved to the just."

517. 1. St. Felicitas and her seven sons suffered martyrdom in the persecution of Emperor Antoninus (A. D. 150). Sylvanus, one of the sons, when threatened with the torment of fire, if he refused to sacrifice to idols, thus spoke to the tyrant Publius in the name of all:

"If we feared a passing destruction, we should incur eternal punishment. But knowing what rewards are prepared for the righteous, and what punishment is appointed for sinners, we fearlessly despise unjust human laws, to keep the divine commands. For they who, despising idols, serve Almighty God, will find eternal life; but they who adore demons will be with them in destruction and in everlasting burning."[1]

2. St. Maximus, a plebeian laborer under Decius.

As the martyr was being beaten with clubs, the proconsul said: "Sacrifice, Maximus, that thou mayest be free from these torments." Maximus replied: "These are not torments which are inflicted for the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, but anointings. But if I depart from the commandments of my Lord, in which I have been instructed from His Gospel, there will await me real and perpetual torments."[2]

3. St. Dionysia, a young girl of 16 (A. D. 484).

On seeing the miserable fall of one who had apostatized under torture, she cried out: "Most unhappy and miserable man, who for the sake of one hour hast gained for thyself perpetual and unspeakable punishment."[3] She was beheaded.

4. St. Hermes.

The prefect Bassus having said to him: "You shall be burned alive if you persist in your insane worship of Christ," he courageously answered: "You threaten me with this light flame, which is soon extinguished, ignoring the violence of the perpetual fire, which shall burn without ceasing."[4]

5. St. Ferreolus of Vienne, an officer in the imperial army under Severus (A. D. 212).

The prefect offered him pardon for "his contumacious words against the gods," if he would repent, renounce Christ and sacrifice to the idols. The brave martyr promptly answered: "You confound the right order of things by preferring the temporal to the eternal; things dead to the living, falsehood to

[1] Ruinart, pp. 26, 27, 2nd Ed. [2] Id., n. 2, p. 157. [3] Id., n. 3, p. 159.
[4] Acts of St. Philip, Bishop of Heraclea. Patuzzi, p. 170, n. xxii, 2d Edit.

truth, and therefore you are condemned forever with the malignant spirits." [5]

6. SS. Marcian and Lucian (A. D. 600).

They were magicians converted to Christianity on finding their powerlessness against the worshipers of Jesus. "We are prepared," said Marcian to the magistrate, "for any torment which you may inflict, rather than by denying the living and true God to be cast into outer darkness and unextinguishable fire, which God prepared for the devil and his angels." [6]

7. St. Claudius, under Diocletian.

He thus spoke to Lysias, the imperial officer: "Thou canst not injure me by thy torments, but providest for thy own soul unquenchable fire and eternal sufferings." [7]

8. St. Domnina, under Diocletian.

She thus addressed the judge: "Lest I fall into eternal fire and perpetual torments, I worship God and His Christ, who made heaven and earth, and all that is in them." [8] She expired under the scourges.

9. St. Theonilla, a noble matron under Diocletian.

The prefect said to her: "Thou seest, woman, what fire and what torments are here prepared for those who dare to contradict." She replied: "I fear eternal fire, which can *destroy body and soul,* especially of those, who have impiously left God and have adored idols and demons." [9] She too expired under the cruel tortures. For true meaning of words in italic see Luke xii. 4, 5, and Part IX.

10. St. Victor, a soldier of noble birth under Maximian.

He was tried in the presence of the Emperor. The following sayings are recorded of him: "These, which I suffer, are not rightly called torments, but refreshments, which extinguish eternal sufferings. No one, however insane, concedes bliss to the flagitious. It remains then true that the only retributions for such after this life, is everlasting misery, and condemnation to eternal burnings." Addressing some of his fellow-soldiers, who guarded him and had been converted, he said: "Endure momentary sufferings, that you may triumphantly escape those that are eternal." [10]

11. St. Tarachus, a veteran soldier and Roman citizen.

When the tyrant Maximus ordered that his hands should be burned, he heroically bore the excruciating pain and said to him: "I fear not your temporary fire, but I fear, if I give way to you, that I become partaker after death, of the eternal fire." [11]

12. St. Crispina (A. D. 304), a celebrated African martyr, a matron of noble rank and great wealth.

[5] Ruinart, n. 2, p. 510. [6] Id., n. 6, p. 168. [7] Id., p. 280
[8] Id., n. 5, p. 281. [9] Id., p. 281. [10] Id., n. 2, p. 300. [11] Id., n. 1, p. 458.

The proconsul asked her: "Dost thou wish to live long or to die in suffering, like thy companions, Maxima, Donatilla, and Secunda?" She answered: "If I willed to die and give my soul to destruction and to eternal fire, I would give my will to thy demons." St. Augustine says of her: "Is there any one in Africa who does not know of her?" [12]

13. St. Afra, under Diocletian.

Converted from her evil ways and full of confidence in the infinite mercy of Jesus Christ, she prayed to Him before her execution thus:

"O Lord Almighty Jesus Christ, who camest not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, accept my penitence in this hour of my passion, and through this temporal fire, which is prepared for my body, deliver me from that eternal fire, which burneth soul and body together," that is, the reprobate soul immediately after the particular judgment; and soul and body after the universal judgment for all eternity, as Catholic faith teaches us. She was burned alive.[13]

14. St. Peter Balsamus, a martyr of Palestine under Emperor Maximian.

He thus spoke to his sympathizing friends, grieved at the streams of blood coming from his wounds: "These punishments are of no account, nor do they inflict any pain on me. But if I deny the name of my God, I know that I shall incur real punishment and greater perpetual torments.[14]

15. St. Julius, a veteran soldier of the Persian Army under King Sapor.

When taunted by Maximus with the folly of making more of a dead man [Christ] than of kings who lived, he answered. "Christ died for us that He might give us eternal life. But He is God abiding forever, whom if any one confess, he shall have eternal life; if he deny, he shall have perpetual punishment." [15]

16. St. Patricius, Bishop under Julian the Apostate.

Being bidden by the proconsul to worship the idols Ascalaphius and Sylvanus, he replied: "God, knowing that men would offend Him, their Creator and Lord, made two abodes, one resplendent with everlasting light, and full of all exquisite goods, the other with perpetual darkness and fire for an everlasting punishment; that those, who had pleased Him and obeyed His word, might live in perpetual light; but they who, through their licentious life, had deserved His anger, should be cast into darkness, to all punishment and eternal torments." [16]

17. St. Simeon, Bishop, Martyr, under Sapor, King of Persia.

He thus spoke to his companions led to martyrdom: "Know, my beloved, that this our death will live in everlasting life; but that this life through apostasy, will die by an eternal death.

[12] Sermon 354, n. 5. [13] Assemani, Acta Martyrum, xii, p. 221.
[14] Ruinart, n. 1, p. 558. [15] Id., p. 615. [16] Id, p. 622.

Each will give exact account of his life here, and each will receive deathless reward of what he has done well, or will sustain deathless punishment if he has done ill."[17]

18. St. Miles, Bishop in the Orient.

He thus addressed his proud judge: "Woe to you! God shall judge you in the world to come in Gehenna and darkness, and will requite to your pride weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever and ever."[18]

19. St. Acepsimas, under King Sapor.

While he was tormented, the impious tyrant tauntingly asked him: "Where is thy God now, let Him come and deliver you, if He can, from my hand." The venerable old man replied: "God could certainly deliver me, if He would. As to yourself, you need not boast, for your life is a flower that will soon fade. You are dead, though you live, because you do not live in the love of God, your Maker. You will die the temporal death, and the other death by burning forever in Gehenna, by the righteous judgment of God. The fire which you worship instead of your Creator, will torment both your soul and your body."[19] [The Pagan Persians adored Fire as a god.]

20. St. Joseph, a priest (A. D. 302).

He thus said to his torturer: "You destroy my body; it is in your power. But you cannot destroy my soul, nor annul the good hope of the resurrection unto life promised to us; for you there is prepared weeping and gnashing of teeth forever and ever."

It is plain that we could add thousands of other names easily culled from the sixty-three folio volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, that monumental work of the Bollandists,[20] which only Catholic Christianity could produce.

518. It is evident that no mere human courage and fortitude could enable weak human creatures to display such heroism; hence the necessity of the all-powerful assistance of divine grace. Now, can we suppose that Almighty God, eternal, immutable truth, whilst helping the martyrs to remain faithful to Him under tortures, would allow them to bear witness in their dying hours to statements that are not true? Could the Lord give countenance to a lie? Hence the inevitable conclusion that the language of the martyr furnishes an additional evidence of the truth of the divinely revealed Christian dogma, the eternity of the punishment of Hell, and of the dreadful reality of the torment of fire, so often mentioned by those intrepid heroes, who confirmed their faith by the greatest of sacrifices, that of their lives. As Christ said: "Greater love than this no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friends."[21]

[17] Assemani, Acta Martyr., i. 33. [18] Id., i. 77.
[19] Id., p. 181. [20] See Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. ii. p. 630.
[21] John xv. 13.

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CHAPTER XI

HELL'S ETERNAL DURATION ASSERTED BY ANCIENT AND MODERN PEOPLES AND BY BOTH HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN WRITERS

PRELIMINARY NOTE ON PRIMITIVE TRADITION

By the deposit of primitive tradition historians understand the principles of morality and the truths of religion which God revealed to our progenitors, and were handed down to posterity. They may be reduced to the following fundamental heads:

A. That there is within ourselves an immaterial principle, the soul.

B. That there exists above ourselves a Being infinitely intelligent, powerful and perfect, God, the Creator and Ruler of all things.

C. That between ourselves and Him there are relations of subjection, dependence, and obligation.

D. That death is but a passage to another world, where the soul will live an immortal life.

E. That, as conscience testifies, we are accountable to the Supreme, invisible Judge for the use we shall make of our liberty, whether good or evil, and shall accordingly receive either reward or punishment.

Though these truths may be said to belong to the natural order inasmuch as they are attainable by man's natural faculties, yet they are rightly traced to primitive divine revelation, which was intended to sanction and preserve them in their substantial integrity for the benefit of the human race.

We may here apply the doctrine of St. Thomas, who says of divine revelation that it was given to facilitate and hasten the attainment of those truths, and to preserve them from error.

Hence he writes: "*Homines quovis tempore divinitus instructi sunt.*"—"Men have been, at all times, divinely instructed."

When, after the Deluge, men were dispersed and went to live in different countries the leaders or chiefs of the several expeditions brought along with them to their new habitations the fundamental principles of religion and morality, which were transmitted to the succeeding generations. Authority was their teacher, and tradition was the chief argument to which they appealed to justify their belief. Hence these most important religious and moral truths were looked upon and cherished as the legacy they had received from their fathers, and these in turn from their predecessors, tracing them from one generation to another to primeval men, to whom God had personally revealed them.

In spite of the perversion wrought by idolatry, superstition, and moral corruption, the primitive tradition never became totally extinct, owing particularly to the influence exerted by the Hebrew nation, whose providential destiny was to preserve among Gentile peoples, among whom they dwelt in captivity, the religious and moral truths handed down from the remotest antiquity.[1] (See n. **477.**)

Auguste Nicolas, after a thorough review of the religious and moral tenets of both ancient and modern nations, as testified by trustworthy historians, concludes thus: "In all the primitive peoples, and in all the countries discovered by navigators in the East and West; in the remotest islands it was found that among other salutary truths the fear of eternal hell had penetrated into all regions. Then the whole world, whether civilized or barbarian, ancient or modern; its poets, its philosophers, its historians, all bear witness to the truth of the Christian dogma on the existence of eternal pains for impenitent sinners.

Whence comes this belief entertained by the whole human race? It springs, no doubt, from the primitive revelation imparted by God to our first parents, which accounts for its being permanent, universal and unchangeable.[2]

519. Three distinguished German authors have grappled with the momentous question to be treated in this chapter, viz., Flügel, Knabenbauer, and Cathrein. The two former savants give us the result of their historical investigations regarding the nations of antiquity, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Egypt, and the Hebrew people. The third writer, Father Cathrein, passes in review all the peoples and races of our own times, whether civilized or barbarian. The conclusion to be derived from the result of their conscientious study authorizes us to state that the following chief truths and moral principles are found so deeply rooted in

[1] See Monotheism, by Rev. Henry Formby, ch. 11. See also Tobias xiii. 4.

[2] See Auguste Nicolas, volume iii of his Etudes Philosophiques sur le Christianisme.

the conscience of mankind that neither the vagaries of mythology nor the corruption of morals ever succeeded in stifling or destroying them. We here briefly record such religious truths and rules of conduct as have been preserved in the tradition, history and literature of both ancient and modern nations and tribes.

1. The existence of one chief Deity, the Creator of all things, the Ruler, Provisor, and Judge of mankind.

2. The belief in future retribution of the just, and punishment of the wicked.

3. Their idea of the essential difference between right and wrong, good and evil.

4. Man's accountability to a higher power as to each man's deeds, whether good or bad.

5. Belief in the permanent continuance of man's life in a future world, which evidently implies the immortality of the human soul.

As to this last statement, it is important to recall here again the candid admission of the renowned English writer, Bolingbroke.

"The doctrine of the soul's immortality," he says, "and of a future state of reward and chastisement seemed at first to be lost in the darkness of antiquity. But on further attentive investigation, we find that such a belief precedes all we know for certain about the past. In fact, from the moment that we begin to clear the ground from the chaotic legends of ancient history and mythology, we find the belief in man's future, endless existence established on solid evidence in the sentiments and traditions of the oldest nations we are acquainted with." [3]

520. The five points stated above, as the result of the conscientious investigations of the three aforementioned ethnologists, can doubtless be accepted as a sufficient proof of the proposition announced in this chapter, particularly by such of our readers as may have access to the works of those three distinguished historians.

But to satisfy all earnest inquirers we shall here quote other writers, who with patient industry ransacked the records of past ages and thus enabled posterity to profit by their studies concerning the belief of the human race in the existence of a future, eternal retribution.

Our citations will demonstrate the truth of what St. John Chrysostom said in his treatise on Christian Perfection: "Not only the Jews but also Gentile peoples, poets, philosophers, and historians, taught that the wicked suffer everlasting pains."

As seen in the quotations alleged in Parts III and VI, and in those to be adduced in this chapter, among the truths testified by ancient writers, the spokesmen of their respective nations, we

[3] Urraburu, Philosophia, vol. vi. p. 646, note 2. G. Rawlinson, Religions of the Ancient World.

find also that of the endless duration of future punishment. In fact, some of them not only assert and prove the necessity of some kind of penal retribution, but even go so far as to state their belief in its eternal duration. Now, some may ask: How can this be, since the eternity of future punishment cannot be proved from reason alone? The difficulty is solved, if we recall the fact that hell's eternity was one of the religious, moral truths handed down from primitive divine revelation, the truth which the ancient philosophers found to be in full harmony with the promptings of reason. What God had revealed their natural intelligence and moral sense fully approved.

Having spoken at some length of the belief of the ancient Hebrews in the soul's immortality and future retribution, we here simply remark that such a belief necessarily implies the endless duration of that retribution: a duration commensurate with the immortal existence of the soul whether blessed or reprobate.

As to the Gentile nations, the historian Gunther draws from their ancient writings the following inference: "It is clear that they believed in the existence of three places to be allotted to the departed according to their deserts, Elysium, the Lower Regions, and Tartarus.

"1. Elysium, a delightful abode, is assigned to the righteous who are wholly pure.

"2. To the Lower Regions are temporarily condemned those that must atone for some sins before receiving the reward of the blessed.

"3. Those who, owing to the enormity of their crimes cannot be purified, are destined to endless torments in Tartarus, where they experience the irrevocable anger of the Deity." [4]

521. Daniel Huetius thus speaks of the Greeks:

"They represent the wicked as being plunged into a horrible abyss, where they are tormented by most excruciating fires, without the least hope of deliverance." [5]

Besides the poets, who reproduced in their works the common ideas and convictions of the people among whom they lived, eminent philosophers and historians are reckoned as witnesses to the popular beliefs and traditions.

Plato writes: "Such among the departed as have been guilty of most grievous crimes will suffer endless torments, as Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Tityus, as Homer testifies." [6]

Plato's striking doctrine on the three classes of departed souls and their respective lots, is also set down in his *Phaedo*.[7]

So greatly were Christian writers impressed with the orthodox tendency of some of Plato's teachings that they imagined that he had come into possession of a Greek copy of the Old

[4] Apud Graevium, tom. 12. [5] De Concordia Fidei et Rationis, l. 2, c. 24.
[6] Gorgias, n. 81, p. 386. Paris Ed. Firmin-Didot. [7] Pp. 89–90. Same ed.

Testament. Though there is no solid foundation for such an assertion, still it cannot be doubted that the Jews must have left their mark among the Eastern nations, particularly the Egyptians, with whom they held frequent communications and commercial intercourse. They must, then, have left there traces of the revealed truths which they possessed in the books of Moses and the prophets. Now it is well known that Plato traveled to Egypt, as he had done to Italy and Sicily, in search of wisdom. Clement of Alexandria and Origen, his disciple, believed that several thoughts of Plato's dialogues had been borrowed from Jewish traditions scattered throughout Egypt. Plato in his *Phaedo* (n. 113) and in his *Gorgias* (n. 526) insists on the doctrine of future retribution and admits in clear terms the truth of eternal punishment: "Those," he writes, "who die after committing great crimes, the incorrigibles *(insanabiles)* fall into Tartarus, whence they shall never come out." [8]

The disciples of Pythagoras practised and inculcated humility, purity of thought, and a spirit of prayer and reverence toward the Deity. They held the doctrine of future state, and chastity was to be looked upon as the cardinal virtue of their school.[9]

Plato was not indeed a universalist. He entertained a belief in three possible consequences or results of human life, either eternal blessedness attainable by those souls that had been purified by virtue and philosophy; or a state of purgation before they became worthy of happiness; or a final condemnation without hope of deliverance from Tartarus, the lot incurred by such as were guilty of the most enormous crimes.[10]

One of Plato's disciples writes: "No one should for the sake of a sinful and futile gratification, purchase to himself great and perpetual evils, and thus, by a short life, ruin the much longer one that is to follow." [11]

522. The belief of the Romans is stated by the French historian Montfaçon as follows: "They held that those who were thrust into Tartarus [the classic term for hell], could have no hope of ever escaping from it; that they could no longer expiate their evil deeds, and that they were to be eternally tormented." [12]

Virgil, like Homer, holds that the lower Tartaric regions contain those whose sad doom is irreversible. Thus the vulture gnaws the liver of Tityus and his entrails, which grow as fast as they are devoured, prolific of penal woes: "*Immortale jecur tondens foecundaque poenis viscera.*" [13]

[8] Phaedo n. 114.

[9] See Life and Labors of St. Thomas Aquinas, by Bede Vaughan, Archbishop of Sydney. Vol. 2d. p. 635.

[10] See Phaedo, 62, 113, 114; Gorgias, 523–525; De Civitate, seu De Republica, 614, 620. For these additional items on Plato we are indebted to Reid's often quoted work on Everlasting Punishment and Modern Speculation, pages 369, 370.

[11] Apud Strabeum, n. 120.

[12] Tom. v, Antiquit. Illustr. n. 137.

[13] Æneid. vi.

And Theseus, the Athenian monarch, has no chance of escape: "*Sedit aeternumque sedebit infelix Theseus.*" [14]

The poet Lucretius tells of the eternal pains to be endured by the wicked after death:

"*Aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.*" [15]

Ovid writes of Sisyphus that he was condemned to suffer perpetual pains for his crimes:

"*Perpetuas patitur poenas.*" [16]

Similar testimonies are to be found in Propertius (Eleg. 4), and in Horace's Fourth Book of Odes and other Latin poets.

The prose writers have been quoted on Immortality in Part III, Chapter XVIII.

523. Passing now to other ancient nations we learn from the old historian and geographer, Strabo, that the doctrine of endless punishment for the wicked was taught by Zoroaster to the Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Babylonians, and this is what he himself believed, as related by Strabo: "The dark angel with his followers will be shut up in a dark place to be eternally tormented. But the angel of light and his faithful clients will be brought to a most bright place and rejoice forever at their great recompense." —A belief spread throughout India and Persia.

The same ancient historian narrates that the Brahmins taught the people the doctrine of Plato on the soul's immortality and its endless retribution. (Geog. lib. xiv.)

According to the testimony of D. Petal, a Jesuit missionary, the aboriginal inhabitants of the vast American continent held the doctrine of the endless misery awaiting the wicked in the next world; a belief clearly contained in the ceremonial used at the funeral rites as testified by the United States Ethnological Commission.

Among the important publications issued by the United States Government, there is a volume edited, if I remember correctly, by Mr. Powell, President of the Geographical and Ethnological Commission, appointed to investigate the religious beliefs of the Rocky Mountain Indians and the Eskimos of Alaska as evidenced in their funeral rites.

Abundant testimonies to the truth we are vindicating are scattered throughout that most valuable production.

524. As to the belief of the Japanese of the sixteenth century, inherited, no doubt, from their ancestors, we possess a most reliable testimony, that of St. Francis Xavier, who, writing to Europe about his mission in that distant country, thus speaks of the Bonzes, the idolatrous priests: "Every fortnight they address the people and in their speeches they describe the most severe pains of hell, and represent its eternal torments on painted charts

[14] Æneid vi, 598.
[15] De Rerum Natura, lib. 1, 112.
[16] Metamorph. iv. 465.

so vividly that their hearers give vent to their fright by loud lamentations and weepings."

Moreover, their belief in the continued life of the soul after death appears from the fact that to secure to themselves the happiness of eternal life, they appeal to their special protector, the Deity Amida.

525. The Mohammedans, as we learn from the Alcoran, their sacred book, hold that all unbelievers and apostates from their creed, shall be condemned to hell fire forever.

From the above testimonies there arises an unanswerable argument in favor of our thesis and a complete refutation of the opponents of the Christian dogma we are defending. For here it is not a question of a belief pandering to human passions, and therefore easily acceptable to man's corrupt nature, but of a doctrine eminently fitted to repress men's evil tendencies, and inspire terror and consternation into the mind and heart of all, particularly of reckless criminals. As to the origin of such universal and constant belief, the writers who have studied this question are agreed in maintaining that it must be traced to a primitive tradition based on divine revelation, a tradition which was spread among the different nations and peoples of mankind. This tradition, owing particularly to the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures, was providentially preserved from heathen mythological error and foreign admixtures which tended to efface it.

The historian Theodoret thus writes of Plato, who, as we have seen, in his *Phaedo* (n. 62) and *Gorgias* admits the eternity of future punishment:

"Having gone to Egypt, there he became acquainted with the writings of Isaias, brought there by Jewish immigrants and perusing them he may have eventually met those striking passages:

" 'Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched.' [17] 'Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' [18] 'For Tophet is prepared from yesterday, prepared by the King, deep and wide. The nourishment thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord as a torment of brimstone kindling it.' " [19]

Thomas, a member of the French Academy (A. D. 1735) converted to Christianity in his last illness, thus wrote on the necessity and justice of eternal punishment:

"Experience proves that this Christian dogma, however terrible, is not too strong for deterring men from transgressing the divine commandments. This penalty, therefore, is eminently adapted to the wise and merciful end the Supreme Legislator had in view, which was to supply men with a means that, without tampering with their liberty, would prevent disobedience to His laws. Being intended for so benevolent a purpose it

[17] Is. lxvi. 24. [18] Is. xxxiii. 14. [19] Id. xxx. 33.

cannot be unjust. Experience, then, by proving its necessity, proves also it justice." [20]

If we could know all the sins, crimes, and excesses which the thought of hell's eternity has prevented and will prevent even to the crack of doom, we would then fully realize the necessity of such a sanction. Now it is easy from its necessity to infer its actual existence on the principle that God, a most merciful Provisor, could not fail to furnish to His rational creatures a means so efficacious to prevent them from forfeiting their last, happy end, everlasting bliss. To those that deny the necessity of a punitive sanction Jean Jacques Rousseau gave the following answer:

"Philosophers, your morality is very fine indeed; but show me, please, what sanction is to enforce it: what have you put instead of the eternal hell which you reject?" [21]

526. The historian Gibbon, who was no friend of Christianity, assigns as one of the reasons of the rapid diffusion of the Christian religion, the belief of eternal punishment.[22] We simply quote him as a witness to the belief of early Christians in that dogma. Cardinal Newman in his "Grammar of Assent" expresses his views on this statement by the antichristian historian Gibbon.

527. As to comparatively modern poetic writers, for brevity's sake we confine the reader's attention to only two great poets, Dante and Milton, who both dealt with subjects which afforded them the occasion to give utterance in sublime verse to their belief in the eternal duration of the punitive sanction.

Dante (A. D. 1265). We quote from this most distinguished of the Italian poets, the terrible inscription over the gate of hell, the Inferno, the first part of his immortal *Commedia*. The gate of hell is thus made to speak:

> "Through me men go into the city of wailings;
> Through me men go into endless woe:
> Through me men go to join those lost for aye."

Then hell itself speaks thus:

> "I was made by Divine Power,
> By Sovereign Wisdom and primeval Love.
> Before me nothing was but things created
> And made to endure forever.
> And I myself shall last eternally.
> All hope abandon ye who enter here." [23]

Here Dante conveys a sound theological truth, when he says

[20] Reflections Philosophiques. [21] Emile.
[22] Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, c. xvi. [23] Canto iii. 4–10.

that hell was created by the joint action of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, that is, by the Omnipotence of the Father, the Wisdom of the Son, and the Love of the Holy Ghost.

As commentators remark, hell is the work of Divine Omnipotence, which thus shows its power to punish the rebellious angelic spirits,[24] and impenitent human creatures.[25] It is the work of Divine Wisdom, which perfectly knows how to proportion the severity of punishment to the gravity of the offense. It is also the work of the Divine Spirit, the Holy Ghost, because of His love of good, law, and order, and of the infinite hatred of their opposite, sin. Moreover, the poet, undisturbed by the sophisms of infidels, past and future, and steadfast in his Christian belief, fearlessly proclaims the justice of the eternal pains, saying:

"Justice did move my Supreme Creator."

Professor Franz Hettinger, in his learned work on Dante's *Divina Commedia*, makes the following judicious remarks: "Did Dante himself believe his hell to have a real existence, or did he regard it simply as the creation of his imagination, reflecting as in a mirror the condition of the wicked upon earth? We must make this distinction. The actual images of its torments are the poet's own work; but the idea of the retributive justice of God eternally rejecting the impenitent sinner, the notion of the punishment varying with the sin are doctrines intimately and necessarily bound up in the poet's belief in God and with it they stand or fall. Now Dante was a thorough man, but before all a thorough Christian. One single mortal sin, therefore, suffices to plunge even the patriot, the philosopher, the statesman, into hell, however distinguished he may have been in life or honored in death. The triumph of divine justice before which all that is best in man, his feelings of compassion, of love, must bow in silence, constitutes the greatness of the *Commedia*." [26]

We fully endorse the following appreciation of this greatest of Italian poets by the renowned French writer Frederic Ozanam: "The *Divina Commedia* is the literary and philosophic *Summa* of the Middle Ages; and Dante, its author, is the St. Thomas of poetry." [27]

John Milton (A. D. 1608), England's greatest epic poet, thus speaks of hell, Satan's abode, in his immortal production, Paradise Lost:

> "Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
> And rest can never dwell, hope never comes.
> That comes to all; but torture without end.
> Such place eternal justice hath prepared.

[24] Matt. xxv. 41. [25] Id., xxv. 46.

[26] Dante's Divina Commedia, Its Scope and Value. Edited by Henry Sebastian Bowden, of the Oratory, p. 147.

[27] Dante and Catholic Philosophy, p. 356.

For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness." [28]

We conclude this Seventh Part with quotations from two writers who cannot be suspected of being partial to Christianity:

Diderot (d. 1784) to his soul: "If you abuse your reason you will be unhappy, not only in this life, but after death, in hell." Soul: "And who told you there is a hell?" Diderot: "If you have but a doubt, you ought to act as if there was one." Soul: "And if I am sure that there is none?" Diderot: "I defy you to it."

Voltaire's correspondent: "I believe, at last, that I have discovered the certainty of the non-existence of hell."

Voltaire: "Most happy are you! I am far from having arrived at it."

528. A fiery eternity—short but terrible words. Always to burn without hope, without end. Is not such a punishment most formidable? Dear reader, think frequently of those everlasting flames. To escape the danger of falling into them restrain within lawful bounds your evil propensities, keeping them subject to the empire of reason and the injunctions of Christian Faith. As St. Paul tells us, "they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." [29]

In Psalm liv. verse 16, we read: "Let them go down alive into hell." If we descend into hell while living by often meditating upon it, we shall avoid being condemned to it when dead. This is precisely the timely counsel of St. John Chrysostom. "No one of those who have hell before their eyes will fall into hell. No one of those who despise hell will escape hell. It is a great evil to despise a divine threat. He who despises threatening will soon have experience of it in reality." [30]

We append a liturgical prayer, which all sincere Christian believers should frequently recite.

HYMNUS—TEMPORE ADVENTUS

Ut, cum tribunal Judicis
Damnabit igni noxios,
Et vox amica debitum
Vocabit ad coelum pios,

Non esca flammarum nigros
Volvamur inter turbines,
Vultu Dei sed compotes
Coeli fruamur gaudiis.

ADVENT HYMN—MATINS

That when the judgment-seat on high
Shall fix the sinner's doom,

[28] Bk. i. 60–70. [29] Gal. v. 24. [30] Homil. on 1 Thess.

And to the just a glad voice cry
Come to your destined home;

Safe from the black and yawning lake
Of restless, endless pain,
We may the face of God partake,
The bliss of heaven attain.
—Translation by Cardinal Newman.

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PART VIII

REMARKS OR PRINCIPLES INTENDED TO FACILITATE THE SOLUTION OF DIFFICULTIES AGAINST ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

CHAPTER I

REMARKS I TO V

NOTE

529. Before answering the chief objections, which infidels or ill-instructed Christians are wont to advance against the awful truth of never-ending punishment to be meted out to the impenitent sinners after death, we shall call the reader's attention to a series of remarks, which will, in great measure, contribute to strengthen our position and to prepare him to answer the difficulties that are generally brought against the truth of the existence and eternity of hell.

We may here premise that the mastering of this subject is no child's play; it demands of the reader attentive and earnest reflection on the doctrine which it is of vital importance for him to know. The hastily scanned page teaches him nothing; the acquisition of knowledge in this as well as in other departments is the reward of diligent and conscientious application.

REMARK I

530. The light of reason shows that among the attributes proper to the Deity we must reckon infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness. Now, divine revelation, which reason proves to be an authentic and reliable record of God's dealings with His rational creatures,[1] tells us in the clearest language that God, infinitely wise, just, and good, has established a double sanction to enforce the execution of His laws, viz., the promise of eternal happiness to the observers of His laws, and the threat of eternal punishment to their transgressors. Hence there follows this perfectly logical and inevitable conclusion, that therefore a double sanction really exists, which is quite conformable to the divine attributes of wisdom, justice, and goodness. This is the plain teaching of reason. Shall we say that this same light, common to all rational creatures, manifesting itself in the unanimous consent of mankind, can find plausible, satisfactory, convincing arguments against the eternal duration of the punishment re-

[1] See Ch. Apologetics, nn. 149–200.

served to the wicked in the world to come? We give to this question a most emphatic negative answer, for the light of reason, given us by the infinitely wise and benevolent Creator to lead us to the knowledge of truth cannot bring us to error, as long as we make a right use of it. And there is what constitutes the great misfortune of mankind, to be led to the belief and acceptance of erroneous doctrines and principles, by the preposterous use of that very faculty which has been given to men for the attainment of truth.

REMARK II

531. Right reason can detect no injustice in the fact that God, the Supreme Lawgiver and Sovereign Lord, has fixed a certain, determined length of time, commensurate with the duration of men's life on earth as the period of their probation, which being elapsed, there shall remain no further hope of pardon to sinners.

And in fact, where, we may ask, could there be any injustice in this provision? Is God Almighty bound always to keep open the door of pardon, in order that men may never find closed the door of sin? By what right can man exact from God that He should never deny pardon to sinners? Where is the obligation binding Him never to refuse pardon to the transgressors of His laws? Is forgiveness a matter of justice or rather of mercy? It is true, as we know from divine revelation, that He promised to forgive sinners whenever they would repent of their evil deeds and seek pardon from His mercy. But these promises are evidently limited to the present life, as is clearly shown from the language of Holy Writ, of both the Old and the New Testaments: "It is easy before God, in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways."[2] "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."[3] "Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith."[4] For other similar Scriptural testimonies see nn. **182** and **489.**

But were we to suppose that, as some would have us believe, there will be for the wicked either pardon or happiness or final annihilation, how would the matter look from the standpoint of the sinner? Would it not mean his victory over the Almighty, and the ultimate triumph of sin? We can believe that man may, by a sinful life, wilfully place himself outside the reach of God's love and mercy, through his obstinate impenitence; but we find it absurd to believe that he can, by an act of his own, place himself outside the sphere of God's rule and government, and thus escape his eternal destiny. This destiny is the glory of God by the exaltation of His divine attributes. Therefore, rational creatures must either glorify for all eternity God's mercy

[2] Ecclus. xi. 28. [3] 2 Cor. vi. 2. [4] Gal. vi. 10.

and goodness, by free obedience, or, if rebellious, glorify forever God's power and justice by inevitable punishment. (See n. **71.**)

In the English review, *The Month,* for January, 1882, there appeared an article from which we cite the following remarks appropriate to our subject:

"What if the sinner reject all invitations to repentance, and wilfully turns aside from God? What if he only hate Him more and more, and defy Him with ever-increasing violence and audacity? Is God to reward this defiance of His divine majesty by opening the door of heaven, and inviting within its portals His bitter, unrelenting, rebellious, blaspheming enemy? It is in view of this insuperable objection of the Restitution theory (devised by Universalists) that the clumsy and gratuitous hypothesis of annihilation has been invented in order to save the Deity from the inconceivable degradation of having to give in to the sinner, if only he be sufficiently persistent, thus encouraging sin and rewarding revolt."

In conclusion, the sinner knows full well from divine revelation that, after death, the time of trial ceases, and that consequently beyond the tomb there will be no repentance acceptable to Almighty God, no forgiveness of sin.

Moreover, from the light of reason and the voice of revelation, he knows that man's soul is immortal. Now, if notwithstanding this knowledge, he prefers to die in the state of unrepented sin, it is evident that he, of his own accord, places himself in a condition of perpetual, irreconcilable enmity with his Creator and Judge. Is there anything unjust or inconsistent with reason if the punishment will last as long as the guilt, that is, forever? Should not an eternal enemy of God be eternally punished? The rejection of the grace of conversion, namely, resistance to God's invitations to repentance, is what the Gospel calls blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and everlasting sin. "He that shall blaspheme," says Jesus Christ, "against the Holy Ghost, shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin."[5] No wonder, then, if eternal rebellion is to meet eternal chastisement. Hence the reason for retribution to-day is a reason forever, for the duration of the punishment, to be proportionate, must be commensurate with that of the transgression. The guilt of the divine offense once incurred, is a standing, irretrievable fact so long as it has not been effaced by timely repentance in this life.

REMARK III

532. It is a mistake to suppose that the principal object of punishment is to reform the criminal and to restrain him from evil-doing. The main purpose of punishment is the restoration

[5] Mark iii. 29.

or vindication of moral order violated by sin and the reparation of the outrage done to divine Majesty by the sinner, who, after offending his Creator and Supreme Benefactor, obstinately perseveres in his state of enmity to the bitter end. The execution of justice, then, is the first and primary consideration and constitutes the very essence of punishment. Even the penalty that is inflicted according to human laws, is not always medicinal to him that is punished, but to others, as when a murderer is hanged, not for his own reform, but to deter others from crime. "The wicked man being scourged," says Holy Writ, "the fool shall be wiser."[6] So then also the everlasting punishment of the reprobate, inflicted by God is medicinal to those who reflecting upon it refrain from sin, its cause.[7]

"That conscience supports endless retribution is also evidenced by the universality and steadiness of the dread of it. Mankind believe in hell, as they believe in God's existence, by reason of their moral sense. Notwithstanding all the attacks made by unbelievers upon the tenet in every generation, men do not get rid of the fear of future punishment. Skeptics themselves are sometimes distressed by it. But a permanent and general fear among mankind cannot be produced by a mere chimera or a pure figment of the imagination. The very denial of endless retribution evinces, by its spasmodic eagerness and efforts to disprove the tenet, the firmness with which it is entrenched in man's moral constitution. If there really were no hell, absolute indifference toward the notion would long since have been the mood of all mankind, and no arguments, either for or against it, would be constructed."[8]

Some people think they abolished hell by ceasing to believe in it. May God's mercy grant to them the grace to renounce this illusion before it is too late!

The justice of eternal punishment, inflicted on those that die guilty of mortal sin, is proved as follows:

It is a principle of jurisprudence, sanctioned by reason, that a penalty, to be just, should be proportioned to the malice or wickedness of the unlawful, sinful act: a malice or wickedness which grows in proportion to the dignity, majesty, and authority of the person offended. God, whose law is transgressed by the sinner, is a being of supreme dignity and majesty, who possesses an infinite right or claim to the obedience of men. Hence the sin or act by which they rebel against Him, involves a malice or wickedness that is respectively *(respective)* infinite, inasmuch as it injures a God of infinite majesty, and contains the actual, contemptuous rejection of His infinite right to men's submission. Though the sinner may not contest such a right in

[6] Prov. xix. 25.

[7] See Aquinas Ethicus by Joseph Rickaby, S.J., vol. 1, p. 255, n. 2.

[8] From North American Review, vol. cxl, article on Endless Punishment, by William G. D. Shedd.

words, yet he practically denies it in action. Now reason tells us that the greater and more sacred the right violated by an offense, the severer must be its penalty in intensity or in duration. Here it is a question of an offense against an infinite God, which should accordingly be punished by an infinite penalty. But such a penalty cannot be infinite in intensity for two reasons. First, because no finite creature can be affected by anything infinite, that is, in an infinite manner. Secondly, because, if the penalty were infinite in intensity, the reprobates could not be punished in proportion to the gravity and number of their sins, as the penalty intensively infinite would be equally severe for all, for there cannot be greater or less in infinity. This would evidently be against distributive justice, a proceeding impossible on the part of the Supreme Judge. Hence the punishment to be proportionate to the guilt that implies an infinite malice or gravity, as explained above, must be likewise infinite, at least, in duration, and therefore eternal.

We may also say that a just proportion between the offense and the penalty lies in this, that the penalty is entitatively *(entitative)* infinite, for it involves the loss of God, an infinite good. The same truth is shown under Remark IV by a substantially similar argument, though differently expressed.

REMARK IV

533. The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, in several parts of his classical work, the *Summa Theologica,* argues substantially as follows: The principles of sound reason require that there should be a just, equitable proportion between the crime and its punishment, which we find completely verified in the penalty inflicted on the reprobate. In fact, every grievous or deadly sin contains in itself a kind of infinite malice, which calls for a retribution in some manner infinite. But such retribution or chastisement cannot be infinite in intensity, because the creature is incapable of an infinite effect; therefore it must be infinite in duration. Hence, the reason why the pains of hell, to bear a just proportion to th creature's rebellion against its Maker should be, as they actually are, eternal. For in sin two things are to be considered, its relation to God, and its relation to creatures. Considered under the first aspect it implies an infinite disorder, it is an act of measureless malice, for it is an insult against a Being of infinite dignity; it is an outrage against an infinite Majesty, and a supreme contempt of the natural and divine laws, and of the Sovereign Lawgiver, the Lord of the Universe. Sin, considered under the second aspect, viz., as to its relation to creatures, which the sinner prefers to infinite good, the Creator, is evidently finite both because the creatures are finite, and the act of preferring them to God, the Creator, is also finite. And this is the reason why the punishment of sin should, in order to be just,

be both finite and infinite. It is therefore finite in its intensity, and thus it can be proportionate to the guilt of the sinner; but it is infinite in duration, otherwise there would not be the required proportion between the crime and its punishment.[9]

To show that a grievous, deadly sin makes the offender liable to eternal punishment, the Angelic Doctor reasons thus: Sin incurs liability to punishment by this, that it is the subversion of the moral order established by Divine Wisdom for the government and welfare of mankind. Now, so long as the subversion, or violation of order remains, the liability to punishment must remain, for the effect will last as long as the cause producing it will last. Order may be subverted reparably or irreparably. If it involves the withdrawal of an essential principle it is irreparable. But if the principle itself is untouched, then it may be repaired. A simple illustration will explain our statement. If the principle of sight, the organ itself, is lost, that is, totally destroyed, only divine power can restore it. But if it remains intact and only accidental hindrances to vision occur, they may be removed by nature or by medical aid. What happens when a divine command is deliberately transgressed and a mortal sin committed? The human will, by its rebellion, violates the order requiring its subjection to the divine will, and becomes thereby guilty of an inordinateness which is of itself irreparable. The sins, therefore, that turn men away from God, and make them His enemies by taking away charity, bring on of themselves, liability to endless punishment. As God's power can miraculously restore the organ of sight itself, so He can, by His omnipotent grace, repair a moral disorder that is in itself irreparable. But this, according to His divine ordinance, He accomplishes only in the present life, when the merits of Christ are available for the conversion of sinners. Hence, if no application of the merits of Christ is made in this world, as it happens with those who die impenitent, the disorder remains irreparable for all eternity; and consequently for all eternity shall last the punishment caused by and due to that irreparable disorder.[10]

REMARK V

534. 1. The eternity of torments is asserted by various texts which all explicitly describe them as everlasting. Thus hell's punishment is called by the prophet Isaias [11] and by St. Matthew [12] everlasting burnings and everlasting fire: by the prophet Daniel [13] everlasting reproach: by St. Paul [14] eternal punishment: by St. Jude [15] everlasting chains and eternal fire.

As no other text from Holy Writ, and no valid reason can be

[9] See Card. Mazzella, De Deo Creante, pp. 844–850.
[10] 1a 2ae, qu. 87, art. 3. Aquinas Ethicus, vol. i, p. 254.
[11] Is. xxxiii. 14. [12] Matt. iii. 12. [13] Dan. xii. 2.
[14] 2 Thess. i. 9. [15] Jude 6, 7.

adduced to prove that the preceding testimonies should not be taken in their literal, obvious sense, we are fully justified in concluding that they indicate a duration without end.

2. The eternity of torments is demonstrated by texts which plainly deny their termination or end. Thus St. John the Baptist, referring to God's judgment of the wicked, says that "the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire" [16] and Christ Himself, speaking of the reprobate, says that "their worm [or indelible sin, or remorse] dieth not and the fire is not extinguished." [17] Could clearer language be employed to signify endless duration?

3. The eternity of torments is pointed out by the Scriptural sentences which compare the duration of the reward with that of the punishment. This comparison is exhibited in the clearest manner by these words of Jesus Christ: "And these [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting." [18] The same final issue of the just and the wicked is conveyed by the prophet Daniel in the following terms: "And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake: some into life everlasting, and others unto reproach to see it always," or, according to the Theodosian version, "some shall awake unto life eternal; others unto eternal reproach and confusion." [19]

It is plain that the inspired words of both the Old and the New Testaments proclaim the undeniable fact that the punishment of the wicked shall last as long as the recompense of the just, that is, for eternity.[20]

4. The eternity of torments is proved by the Biblical testimonies which deny to the reprobates all hope of future redemption, liberation or forgiveness. These are the words of Christ Himself: "He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." [21]

5. The eternity of torments is clearly established by those passages of Holy Writ which deny to the bad angels all hope of future liberation. Here is what St. Paul says of Christ as Saviour and Redeemer: "Nowhere doth He take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold;" [22] viz., as explained by Cornelius à Lapide after St. Bernard,[23] Christ did not come upon earth to save the fallen angels, whose nature He did not assume. Now we know from Christ's sentence on the last judgment, described by Himself, that the lot of the wicked men and of the rebel angels will be one and the same—"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." [24]

[16] Matt. iii. 12. [17] Mark ix. 43. [18] Matt. xxv. 46 [19] Dan. xii. 2.
[20] See St. Augustine's comment on Matt. xxv. 46, given below (n. **546**).
[21] Matt. xii. 32. [22] Heb. ii. 16. [23] Vol. xix. p. 376, Vives ed.
[24] Matt. xxv. 41.

CHAPTER II

REMARKS VI TO X

REMARK VI

535. Professor William G. T. Shedd in his very able article, "The Certainty of Endless Punishment," referring to Davidson, whom he styles the most learned of English rationalistic critics, quotes from him the following passage, which calls for some comments at our hand: "If a specific sense be attached to words, never-ending misery is enumerated in the Bible. On the presumption that one doctrine is taught, it is the eternity of hell's torments. Bad exegesis may attempt to banish it from the New Testament Scripture, but it is still there, and expositors who wish to get rid of it, as Canon Farrar does, injure the cause they have in view by misrepresentation. It must be allowed that the New Testament record not only makes Christ assert everlasting punishment, but Paul and John."[1]

536. Here are some valuable admissions on the part of our English rationalistic critic:

First: That the Biblical announcement of hell's eternity can be denied only by those who "attach no specific sense to words." Here we ask, what becomes of language, whether written or spoken, if the words used to convey the inner thought contain no meaning whatever? Is it not supremely absurd to suppose that God's revelation in Holy Writ was intended to convey no specific information to men, on whose behalf it was made? We must then attach a specific meaning to the Scriptural sentences proclaiming the nature and duration of punishment of the wicked in the next world, and the obvious meaning is, as he himself says, that the punishment is real as well as eternal.

Secondly: According to the view of the same writer, it is only by bad exegesis—that is, erroneous interpretation—and by wilful misrepresentation that expositors attempt to banish hell's eternity from the New Testament Scripture. Therefore correct interpretation of the Biblical record, and unbiased judgment will lead us to the opposite result, viz., to the admission of the endless duration of hell's torments.

Our rationalist, then, consistently with his theories, adds: "But the question should be looked at from a larger platform than single texts, in the light of God's attributes, and the nature of the soul. The destination of man, and the Creator's infinite goodness, conflicting, as they do, with everlasting punishment, remove it from the sphere of rational belief."

[1] North American Review, vol. cxl, for 1885.

We cannot remove the tenet of hell's eternity from the sphere of rational belief for the following reasons:

First: Because it is a revealed truth and there cannot be any conflict between the voice of human reason and that of divine revelation, for they both spring from the same source—God, eternal, immutable truth, the Creator of reason and the Author of revelation.

Secondly: Because reason is unable, as experience shows, to refute any of the arguments generally brought in support of the doctrine in question.

Thirdly: Because reason actually alleges many powerful arguments to prove the necessity as well as the justice of the eternal sanction of God's Holy Laws.

The most absurd statement of Mr. Davidson is the last, where he says: "If provision be not made in revelation for a change of moral character after death, it is made in reason. Philosophical considerations must not be set aside even by Scripture."

537. In the first place, our learned Doctor here assumes as granted what is to be proved, that men, who have failed to attain their true destiny, heavenly happiness, in the trial of this world, are going to be submitted to another probation in the next. See refutation of this assumption in Remark II.

He also supposes that the principal object of punishment is the reformation of the criminal; a theory utterly false and confuted above in Remark III.

Moreover, does it belong to the creature, or to the Creator, to the subjects or to the Lord, to enact laws and secure their execution by appropriate sanction? Therefore the provision for the right government of the moral world is to be made and has actually been made, not by human reason but by Him who is to judge the acts of rational creatures and either to reward or to punish them according to their deserts.

538. We are pleased to conclude this remark with the following thoughtful reflections of Professor Shedd, whose views are, like ours, entirely opposed to the flippant assertions and gratuitous assumption of the rationalistic English critic:

"So long, then, as the controversy is carried on by an appeal to the Bible, the defender of endless retribution has comparatively an easy task. But when the appeal is made to human feeling and sentiment, or to ratiocination, the demonstration requires more effort. And yet the doctrine is not only Biblical, but rational. It is defensible on the basis of sound ethics and pure reason. Nothing is requisite for its maintenance but the admission of three cardinal truths of theism, namely, that there is a just God, that man has free will, and that sin is voluntary action. If these are denied, there can be no defense of endless punishment, and the result will be no other doctrine except atheism and its corollaries."

Our readers cannot but be convinced that those truths are fully demonstrated by the process of reasoning, and constitute the adamantine foundation sustaining the reasonableness, justice, and wisdom of eternal punishment.

REFERENCES

See Bergier—Dictionnaire Theologique; a French standard work of great repute; vol. ii, p. 438, and cited notes.

REMARK VII

The inspired writer describes in the Book of Wisdom,[2] the fruitless repentance of the wicked in the next world. From within the lost soul there ever arises the cold, clear, inevitable verdict of self-condemnation and useless self-reproach. It writhes in convulsive paroxysm of self-detestation, and self-loathing. No hand can help, no thought can brighten, no will can love, no heart can pity it. To increase and intensify its horrible sufferings, are added the haunting memories, the vivid recollection of what would then be its lot if it had heeded the voice of grace calling it to repentance; how easily God's friendship might have been regained; how gently the good shepherd, in the person of God's minister, stooped, toiled, labored and entreated to save it from perdition; how often the tender arms of divine mercy would have been folded around it with fond caresses and a power enabling it to conquer all temptations and overcome all opposition. But, alas! the perverse, obstinate will struggled against grace, fought against love's last appeal at the dying bed and flung away the blood that could have cleansed it from all iniquity and safely landed it on the shores of eternal bliss. But there is yet more. A soul that has fixed itself on evil, must still, by the essential bent of its being, gravitate with resistless attraction toward God, the light of perfect knowledge, and the center of infinite good. Yet that unhappy soul can never appease its burning thirst for knowledge at the fountain of divine wisdom, nor satiate its yearning for happiness at the sight of the peerless beauty of the Lord of Majesty. As the distinguished philosopher, Leibnitz (d. 1716) remarks: "Those who die in mortal sin would, of their own accord, bury themselves in hell to avoid the presence of the infinite holiness of that God, whom they, by their transgressions have made hateful to themselves." Who can describe the miseries of a soul left to itself, abandoned by God, His angels and saints, and hated by the devils and its companions in torments! The whole nature of that soul is there with all its natural endowments, its spiritual faculties, its appetites and cravings; yet without their objects, thirsting forever for a good that will never come; never consumed, because immortal; longing for total extinction; for

[2] Wis. v. 3, 4, 6, 7, 14.

death that shall ever flee from it. "And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them."[3]

REMARK VIII

539. It is indeed to be regretted that the strange imagination of some people, poets, artists, and even ascetic writers and preachers, when referring to hell's torments, indulge in details and descriptions that have no warrant in Holy Writ. But is the Catholic Church responsible for these unauthorized views? By no means; she is answerable only for her official dogmatic teachings, which are thus briefly summed up concerning the matter at issue.

I. Hell exists, created by God's justice to punish the rebel angels and impenitent sinful human creatures.[4]

II. Hell is a place of torments, comprising the pain of sense and that of loss incurred immediately after death in mortal sin.[5]

III. The penalty of hell is incurred by all who die in the state of grievous, personal sin,[6] and is inflicted immediately after death.

IV. The torments of the damned are eternal.[7]

There is the dogma—whatever else may be said by writers or preachers is not of faith, because not dogmatically defined. However, what we do know from divine revelation, and from the voice of its authorized, infallible interpreter, the Catholic Church, is that hell's torments are real, awful, eternal, and incurred immediately after death in unretracted mortal sin. Is not this terrible? And what more do we require to impress us with salutary fear of God's judgments? Rightfully, therefore, did Diderot (d. 1784) write: "A sensible man will act in life as though there was a hell, so long as even one only fragment of doubt remains in his mind." And what, I say, should man's conduct be, when he reflects that the voice of divine revelation, the whole of Christendom, the promptings of reason and the universal consent of mankind unanimously proclaim the existence and endless duration of that punishment, thus removing all doubts as to the existence and eternal duration of that fearful punitive sanction, which the Omnipotent Judge has placed upon His laws?

REMARK IX

540. It must ever be borne in mind that everlasting punishment is only intended for what St. Thomas calls *certa malitia*, a determined, known malice, deliberately intended and willed. Three conditions, then, must be verified to make a rational crea-

[3] Apoc. ix. 6.
[4] Matt. xxv. 41.
[5] Matt. xxv. 41; Mark ix. 42, 48; Luke xvi. 22. See **Part vi. c. v.**
[6] Benedict xii. A. D. 1336.
[7] Matt. xxv. 46

ture guilty of mortal, deadly sin, and render it amenable to an endless punishment. There must be sufficient knowledge or advertence of the mind, untrammeled freedom of the will, and grave matter. The last condition occurs when the object of the act, its end or the circumstances that accompany it, or the consequences that follow from it, are of a serious nature. If any of the above conditions are wanting, the sin may be only venial, or there may be no sin at all. The God of all justice cannot punish with eternal exclusion from His presence any of His creatures not guilty of a grievous offense. He will make every allowance for antecedent passion, for ignorance, or inadvertence. Let it be said once more, the *fiat* of eternal death issues from the will, not of the Creator, but of the creature, who prefers darkness to light, and deliberately rejects the love that would but failed to win him. I make my own the pathetic words with which Fr. Faber closes his discussion on the relative number of the saved: "As to those who may be lost, I confidently believe that our Heavenly Father threw His arms around each created spirit, and looked it full in the face with bright eyes of love in the darkness of its mortal life, and that of its own deliberate will it would not have Him."[8] One thing we are sure of, with a happy divine assurance, that no heart which turns to God by true repentance, however late the hour may be, can be separated from Him forever. "A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."[9]

REMARK X

541. In our struggles against temptations we should ever remember that nothing is weaker than man, if left to himself, but that nothing is stronger than man if assisted by God's grace. "I can do all things," says St. Paul, "in Him who strengtheneth me."[10] "Our sufficiency is from God."[11] The Catholic theologian must always be prepared to repel the utterly false and blasphemous charge of unbelievers who are wont to represent God as imposing on His creatures burdens too heavy to bear, and exposing them to temptations which are practically insurmountable to human frailty. Their wicked purpose is to insinuate God's injustice in condemning sinners to hell. This impious accusation was made by the Arab Averroes, a Mohammedan, who said: "*Lex Christianorum, lex impossibilium.*"—"The law of Christians is the law of impossibles." This dictum is directly contradicted by our Divine Saviour in His Gospel: "My yoke is sweet and My burden light,"[12] and by the apostle St. John, who writes: "His [God's] commandments are not heavy."[13] This same truth was proclaimed by the lawgiver Moses to his people, the Isra-

[8] The Creator and the Creature, p. 388. [9] Ps. l. 19.
[10] Philipp. iv. 13. [11] 2 Cor. iii. 5. [12] Matt. xi. 30. [13] 1 John v. 3.

elites, in the plainest language: "This commandment that I command thee this day is not above thee, nor far off from thee. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it."[14]

Jesus Christ is a most wise and considerate legislator, not a domineering master. It is a downright insult to assert that He has imposed on us duties, which we cannot fulfil. Yet, as has been shown in our Part I, the neglect of our sacred obligation, the non-observance of His law, entails the loss of our last end, and makes the transgressors liable to endless infernal pains. We may confidently affirm that God in His dealings with His creatures cannot and will not depart one hair's breadth from the rule of strict justice, always leaning on the side of mercy and benevolence. This cheering truth has been revealed by the Lord Himself, both in the Old and in the New Testament. "The Lord is sweet to all," writes the Psalmist, "and His tender mercies are over all His works."[15] "And mercy exalteth itself above judgment."[16]

St. Jerome says of the law of the Gospel that it commands things indeed perfect but not impossible. Thus to the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," Jesus Christ adds, that man must not look upon a woman with a lustful desire.[17] Some one would say, Oh, how difficult! We say, on the contrary, how perfect! How wise and reasonable; for it is easier to nip the first bud of sinful desire than to pull off the bough when it has grown. And it is precisely this additional injunction that facilitates the observance of the command. A similar remark can be applied to all the other prescriptions, with which Christ surrounded the divine law.

It is only from a human, fallible judge that we may fear the condemnation of the innocent; hence, it is no little relief to know that the final verdict as to our eternal lot is to be pronounced by Him who is more than a man, by the Incarnate Son of the living God; by Him, I say, who, being infinitely wise, cannot mistake the guilty for the innocent; by Him who, being infinitely just, cannot inflict a punishment greater than the sinner deserves; by Him, who, being infinitely perfect, cannot be swayed by passion or controlled by revenge.

542. To inculcate this truth Bishop Vaughan in his excellent book, "Earth to Heaven," makes use of this apposite illustration: He represents the several pleadings put forth by a condemned soul at the judgment seat: "Driven back from one excuse to another, it will, at last, have recourse to the plea of weakness, and human frailty. 'I yielded to sin, because my inclinations to evil and my passions were so strong. I was allured and seduced by the resistless attractions of vice and the enticing pleasures of the flesh. Temptations were so persistent

[14] Deut. xxx. 11, 14. [15] Ps. cxliv. 9. [16] James ii. 13. [17] Matt. v. 28.

and so difficult to cope with.' But will excuses like these rescue the guilty soul from its fate? Christ, its Judge, will reply: 'Truly, you are weak, when left to yourself, for, as I said in My Gospel, without Me you can do nothing available for salvation. But My grace is all powerful and could make you immeasurably stronger than all your passions and the enemies of your soul. Nothing is weaker than man when left to himself, nothing stronger when I am with him. Hence, when I was asked by My disciples: "Who then can be saved?" I answered: "The things that are impossible with men, are possible with God."[18] Though you knew all this, did you ask for My grace? Did you pray with faith and earnestness? Did you make use of the means of strength which I have put within your reach? Did you frequent the sacraments? Did you feed and grow strong on the food of angels?—My own body and blood received in Holy Communion? If not, what right have you to complain? You wicked servant, out of your own mouth I condemn you. What more could I have done for you? I died to save you, and yet you are lost.' "

Among the mysteries of human life is the abyss of malice, into which some rebellious creatures obstinately plunge. Some such individuals are so fixed in the spirit of revolt that, when the alternative is before them, either submission to God with eternal happiness as its reward or resistance to His will, with everlasting reprobation as its consequence, they deliberately choose the latter fate. We read in the life of St. Francis Borgia, S. J., that once, while he was praying at the bedside of a dying sinner, he saw the crucifix he held before the dying man hold out its arms toward him and heard it beg of him in tones of tenderness and love not to reject the proffered mercy. But the hardened sinner turned his head away with an expression of aversion and despair, thus closing his criminal life with final impenitence. Will any one blame the Supreme Judge for allotting to that obdurate soul the destiny which it had itself freely chosen before departing from this world? And will he not be compelled to admit that he and he alone is the guilty author of his own irreparable woe?

"*Adsum qui feci,*
In me convertite ferrum."[19]
"I am guilty,
Turn against me the sword."

[18] Luke xviii. 26, 27. [19] Petronius, Satyr. 103.

CHAPTER III

REMARKS XI TO XV

REMARK XI

543. As God manifests His infinite love of righteousness and holiness by promising and bestowing an unending reward for acts of holiness and virtue done in the state of grace, so He manifests His infinite hatred of evil by inflicting unending punishment on the guilt of grievous sin, if not repented of in the present life. Without this man could never form an idea of God's infinite hatred of sin. A temporary hell would leave mankind under the impression that God's hatred for sin is not infinite but limited. Let us suppose for argument's sake that the theory of the Restitutionists should be true, namely, that after the expiration of the time assigned for the expiation of sin, every sinner, even the most obdurate, should be admitted to the company of the blessed. What would then be our conception of God? The eternity of bliss allotted to the just would indeed proclaim God's infinite love of holiness and virtue; but a temporary hell would proclaim God's limited hatred of evil; hence the great moral principle of divine justice hating sin eternally and immeasurably would be hidden from the eyes of man. Only an eternal hell can evidence, assert, and proclaim God's infinite hatred of sin. It cries out to mankind, to see what it is to lose God; to be forever deprived of the presence of Him who is the source of all good, of all happiness and joy! It proclaims most eloquently and convincingly the value God sets on obedience to His commands; hence, a grievous disobedience, if not repented of and canceled in this life, deserves an eternal chastisement in the next.

REMARK XII

544. One of the greatest benefits conferred by God on man was to supply him with a very effective means for avoiding his most fatal evil, deadly sin; and this is done by the divine threat of hell against those who commit it.

Theologians prove that the existence of hell, far from being an evil for man in the present life, is, on the contrary, a real good. It furnishes an additional proof of God's provident love for His rational creatures. In the course of this work, on more than one occasion we have pointed out and demonstrated the fact that mortal sin is the greatest of all evils, and in a true sense an infinite evil. All other evils are limited; this alone is unlimited in its disastrous consequences here and hereafter. It turns men into rebels, enemies of God, whose offenses no human or angelic atonement can expiate independently of Christ's redeeming

blood. Holy Scripture says: "They that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul."[1] All other evils call for pity and compassion; sin alone calls for genuine, unmitigated hatred. "Thou, O Lord, hatest all the workers of iniquity."[2] "To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike."[3] Now, sin, being so great an evil, is it not clear that the greatest benefit God could confer on man was to supply him with an effective means of escaping from its deadly plague—a means which, without tampering with his liberty, could furnish him with a motive powerful enough to deter him from committing sin? God, indeed, will not force man's freedom; He will not take away from him that precious, though perilous gift. Yet He does warn him with a warning so terrible that nothing else could be more efficient to keep the monster of sin at a distance, and to strengthen him against its assaults. The language of our Blessed Saviour, mingled with tenderness and menace, clearly tells us that we should look upon the existence of hell's awful penalty as a distinctive benefit to the fallen human race. "And I say to you, My friends: Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear: Fear ye Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him."[4]

Such words, coming from the lips of Incarnate Wisdom itself, give us a salutary glimpse into the unseen world and cannot fail to strike terror into the boldest sinner in whose soul there yet lingers a spark of Christian faith.

545. God bids us to be convinced of and firmly believe in the reality of future punishment, that the recollection of this terrific truth may deter us from sin in the dangerous moments of temptation and spur us on to courage and perseverance in the arduous path of virtue. Human life has its critical moments, when higher motives, inspired by the love of God and the hope of reward, seem to be shorn of their power to influence our evil propensities and carnal minds. The attractions of sin are, at times, actually bewitching and intoxicating. Then it is that, if we mean to conquer, we must summon to our aid the thought of the eternity of torments, compared with which all earthly sufferings are as a drop in the ocean. Might not the next violation of God's law fill the measure of the sinner's iniquities, and instantly plunge him into the dread abyss? Who can assure him of the contrary? Are there not such things as sudden and unprovided deaths?

From all these reflections we rightly conclude that endless punishment is not purely vindictive; it does not merely avenge the outraged majesty of the Lord; it is moreover a most powerful deterrent from sin. It is safe to say that the meditation on

[1] Tob. xii. 10. [2] Ps. v. 7. [3] Wis. xiv. 9. [4] Luke xii. 4, 5.

hell has landed more souls into heaven than that of any other Christian truth.

REMARK XIII

546. It is frequently urged by our adversaries that both the adjective "eternal," and the word "eternity," occurring in many passages of Holy Writ, simply mean a long but not an endless duration. We answer by simply recalling the words of Christ, as found registered in St. Matthew's Gospel: "And these [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just, into life everlasting."[5] Here all agree that by life everlasting promised to the just is meant an endless life. On what ground can any sensible man maintain that the term "everlasting," applied to punishment, bears an altogether different meaning, and signifies not an eternal, but a temporary duration? In a matter of such extremely vital importance, namely, the determination of the final lot to be assigned to each human creature, according to his deserts, was our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, the Supreme Judge, at liberty to use equivocal language and thus lead us inevitably into error by giving two opposite meanings to the same identical word? But what is evidently absurd, has actually been said and written by the so-called Restitutionists, who hold that the word "everlasting" in the above-mentioned text, when applied to punishment, means only a limited duration. This is indeed a very old error, for St. Augustine refutes it in the following stringent logic: "We have here in the Redeemer's language, on one side, eternal life, on the other eternal punishment. Now to say that in one and the same sentence *life eternal* shall be without end, and that *punishment eternal* shall have an end, would be absurd."[6] Moreover, according to the well-known rule of interpretation, the Scriptural terms that imply a duration without end must be taken in their obvious, proper sense whenever the contrary meaning cannot be inferred from the context, and the proper literal meaning is not in conflict with any other divinely revealed truth. Though the dogma of eternal punishment is also distinctly stated in the pages of the Old Testament, as we have already shown, yet it is to the final and fullest revelation of God in the New Testament that we naturally turn for the most explicit information on this momentous question. "God who in sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son."[7] Nor shall we turn in vain. The Rev. J. Riddell, the best Greek Oxford scholar of his day, in a special essay prepared at the request of his friend Dr. Pusey, proves that the adjective "eternal" in classical Greek is used strictly of eternity, of an eternal existence, such as shall be when time shall be no more.[8] When referring to the future this term is nowhere used in the New Testament, except of eternal life or

[5] Matt. xxv. 46. [6] De Civit. Dei. xxi. 23. [7] Heb. i. 1, 2. [8] Apoc. x. 6.

eternal punishment.[9] Nothing is further from the truth than the assertion of unbelievers who, to render odious the dogma of the reprobates' damnation, held that God creates a large number of souls for the express purpose of damning them. It is the old blasphemy of the Manicheans against original sin; a blasphemy repeated by the Pelagian heretics and revived in the cruel Calvinian creed. Holy Scripture teaches us, on the contrary, that God creates human souls through love for His honor and glory, and to make them partakers of His own infinite happiness. "Thou, O Lord, lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made. But thou sparest all, because they are Thine, O Lord, who lovest souls." [10]

"Who [God, our Saviour] will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." [11]

The Second Council of Orange, approved by Rome, anathematized those who held that God has, by His sovereign power, predestined some of His rational creatures to evil, and consequently to final reprobation.[12] A fuller answer to this difficulty is given in Part IX.

547. It is admitted on all sides that the abolishing of belief in the doctrine of hell can only embolden criminals by securing to them impunity. It is releasing the great mass of mankind from the sense of moral obligation, and opening the floodgates of every vice and disorder. Destroy the punishment and you destroy the very concept of sin. The general relaxation of the moral ties, the proclamation of sensual license under the deceptive name of liberty, the audacity of crime, which had been before abashed, bold defiance where there had been fear and trembling—these would be the fatal results of the limitation, or the sweeping rejection of the infernal pains.

As St. John Chrysostom said fully fourteen hundred years ago, if belief in eternal punishment does not deter sinners from the broad way of iniquity, shall belief in a temporary hell do it? Indeed, this world of ours would cease to be habitable if the wicked had nothing to fear in the next.

Celsus, though an Epicurean, has nothing to say against the Christian dogma of endless retribution. "The Christians," he remarks, "have reason to think that those who lead holy lives shall be rewarded after death: and that the wicked will be subjected to eternal torments. They entertain this their sentiment with the whole world." [13]

[9] Pusey, What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment, p. 38.
[10] Wis. xi. 25, 27. [11] 1 Tim. ii. 4.
[12] See D. Enchiridion, p. 85, n. 200; p. 148, n. 322.
[13] Origen, Contra Celsum, vii. 48.

REMARK XIV

548. In the course of our discussion we dwelt, on several occasions, on the fact that man, when responsible for his moral conduct, may abuse the gift of liberty and become the cause of his own misery and perdition. In this connection we must solve a difficulty, the tendency of which is to throw on God's prescience the evil-doing of His rational creatures, and thus release the sinner from all accountability to his Creator and Judge. The difficulty is sometimes expressed in the following syllogistic form, which may entrap and deceive the unwary. "What God foresees, must infallibly happen. He foresees all human actions, good and bad; therefore they are necessary, inevitable." Some silly philosophers, unable to extricate themselves from this apparently conclusive reasoning, have denied liberty to man; and others, still more silly, did not hesitate to deny prescience or foreknowledge to God. But an elementary acquaintance with the principles of logic suffices to detect the sophism concealed in the aforementioned syllogism. The author of that objection, Damiron,[14] confounds two notions that are essentially distinct, viz., infallibility and necessity, of which the former belongs to the observer—in our case, to the certain foreknowledge of God; the latter concerns the agent—in our case, the intelligent, free creature, man. What God foresees will infallibly happen, because His foreknowledge cannot be deceived, but from this it does not follow that the things or events foreseen will happen necessarily when it is a question of actions depending on the free deliberation of man. Therefore the necessity of human actions is not to be measured from the certain knowledge of Him that observes them, but from the character or nature of him that performs them. In other words, things do not happen because God foresees them; but He foresees them, because they will happen, either necessarily or freely, according as the agents are destitute of liberty or endowed with it. This is exactly the solution given by some of the greatest thinkers to the objection of unbelievers, who claim that God's foreknowledge tampers with the freedom of man.

Origen says: "Things do not happen because God foresees them in the distant future; but because they will happen, God knows them before they happen.

St. John Chrysostom: "We must not think that because scandals have been foreseen by God's foreknowledge[15] that therefore they will occur; but because they will, in the course of time, occur, He foresaw them; and if they were not to occur, neither would He have foreseen and foretold them."

St. Jerome: "Not because God knows that something will happen, it must therefore happen; but God knowing the future foresees it, because it is to happen."

[14] Psych., vol. ii, p. 75.

[15] Matt. xviii. 7; Luke xvii. 1.

St. John Damascene, in his dialogue against the Manicheans (n. 79) solves this difficulty with substantially the following reasoning: The power of foreknowledge being an attribute inherent in God's own essence, is not, of course, caused by ourselves; but its exercise—that is, the act itself of foreseeing what we intend to do—is produced, in a certain sense, by ourselves, for if we did not deliberate to perform some definite actions, God would not foresee them, because they would not be done. God's prevision is indeed true and infallible, but it does not cause the occurrence of our future free actions. Hence, since we may freely determine to do this or that thing, He foresees it.[16]

REMARK XV

549. The Catholic Church is the divinely appointed guardian, interpreter, and herald of revealed truths, but has no authority to tamper with them by adding to or detracting from God's word.[17]

We occasionally come across certain individuals who tell us that they cannot help admiring the Catholic Church, the majesty of her ritual, the marvelous record of her long history, her wonderful, compact organization, and other not less attractive features. But, they add, they find it impossible to subscribe to her repelling doctrine of everlasting punishment, and they are firmly convinced that, if she should not insist on men's acceptance of that terrific dogma, millions of converts would rush to join her flock. There is something uncongenial to an atmosphere of high intellectual culture and refinement of our age in an ethical system like that of the Roman Catholic Church upholding and teaching the irretrievable lot of the wicked in the world to come.

Our answer is that, even if all modern unbelievers were willing to submit to her authority on that condition, the Catholic Church would not exempt a single one from accepting every point of her doctrine, that of eternal punishment included, and this for the simple reason that it is not in her power to do so. She is the guardian, interpreter, and herald of divine revelation, but has no authority to tamper with it. Moreover, it is a dangerous thing to meddle with revealed truths, which are so perfectly coherent, harmonious, and consistent that to dislodge one is to imperil the rest. Divine revelation, God's masterpiece, resembles an arch so constructed, that all the greater stones shall be keystones. Displace one of them, and the whole fabric falls to pieces and crumbles into dust. Remove the dogma of eternal punishment, and you will find that atonement itself will begin to give way; for, if you reject the idea that a temporary offense, however grievous, should deserve an eternal penalty, you will

[16] See Enchiridion Patr., p. 839; Urraburu, Psychologia, Vol. vi.

[17] See Apoc. xxii. 18, 19.

find it still more hard to understand how such an offense could demand an infinitely precious sacrifice for its reparation, in consequence of which the whole plan of redemption totters and threatens to vanish as an incomprehensible scheme. Is not this what actually happened in the ranks of Protestantism? No sooner did the early reformers alter the divine plan by replacing the infallible authority of the Catholic Church by private judgment than the whole Christian edifice was sapped at its very foundation. One by one the most fundamental dogmas of God's revelations were thrown overboard, and in our days, the very divinity of the Founder of Christianity is either doubted or denied altogether, even by the so-called heralds of Gospel truth. Thus, belief in the dogma of the Trinity is no longer held as a test of orthodoxy for the admission of candidates to the ministry, as was shown not long ago in the Presbyterian Church.

Are we, then, to accept the plain teaching of God's infallible word upon the doctrine of eternal punishment, or the vagaries, illogical inferences, surmises, conjectures, and wild guesses deduced from Scriptural texts distorted from their obvious meaning to make them fit the humanly devised theories of Destructionists, Restorationists, and Universalists? What these several sectarians hold on future retribution, and how they are refuted are points fully discussed in Parts IX and X of this book.

Every doubt cast upon the certainty of a future, endless retribution either good or evil, is suspected in its origin, for it is generally the outcome of pride and passions which blind man's intellect. It is puerile, for it springs from lack of solid, manly thought. It is disastrous in its consequences both here and hereafter, for it robs man of the most efficacious deterrent from evil, and deprives him of the most potent incentive to virtue, thus paving the way to dismal despair by stripping him of the stable basis of Christian hope.

CHAPTER IV

REMARKS XVI TO XX

REMARK XVI

550. God Almighty gives to man a just code of laws, by the fulfilment of which he may gain his end, which is everlasting bliss. He gives him freedom to obey or disobey that just code of laws. He is thus supplied with the opportunity of proving his fitness for heaven by their observance, or of deserving his condemnation to punishment by their transgression. "God made man from the beginning and left him in the hands of his own counsel. He added His commandments and precepts. Before

man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose, shall be given him."[1] Moreover, the Lord places before him the example of His own Son Jesus Christ and of countless men and women of every class and condition of society, who in their lifetime have done what He asked them to do.

Such, then, are the mutual relations between God and man. God is the Master, and man is the servant. God is the Ruler and man is the subject. Now, what is sin? Sin is this. God says to man, His creature: "I who am thy Creator, thy Redeemer, thy Sanctifier, thy last end in the interminable happiness of My kingdom, command thee, under pain of everlasting punishment in hell, to observe My commandments, not to offend Me; to do My will, during the period, short or long, of thy earthly life. Thy loyalty and fidelity shall be rewarded by nothing short of infinite, eternal happiness." And man, the sinner, the crawling worm of the earth, answers back to his Creator, Saviour and Judge: "I defy thee; I will not obey. I will not serve. *Non serviam.*[2] I will do my will, not Thine. Thou didst make and fashion me. Thou didst die for me. Thou didst promise me heaven if I obey, and threaten to punish me if I refuse. I prefer my own will, and my own good pleasure before Thee. I prefer to remain in sin rather than to receive Thy grace and obey Thy laws." All this is implied in the conduct of any sinner who remains obstinate in his rebellion against his Sovereign Creator and Supreme Benefactor. Renan, the notorious writer against the divinity of Christ, hearing of the death bed conversion of two eminent literary men, Thierry and Littré, his contemporaries, and attributing their return to the Church to the softening of their brains, thus defiantly wrote in his "Reminiscences": "I protest in advance against such weakness, which, I hope, will not change my present views." Cruelly true to his resolution he persevered in his apostasy to the bitter end, and died impenitent on October 2, 1892.

Do we not feel that such a sinner has wilfully fixed his own future destiny, sealed his own doom, and preferred the endless torments of hell to the eternal delights of heaven? Far, then, from eternal punishment for sin being a doctrine of harshness, undue severity, and injustice: it is, on the contrary, the inevitable outcome of the sinner's own choice, and a needed reparation to the outraged majesty of the Most High. Take away the eternity of hell and admit a future restoration of even the most reckless sinners, and results like the following will necessarily ensue. An impious man would then be able thus to address the Omnipotent God: "I know that You can inflict on me some terrible punishment at my death; I expect it and I am prepared for it. But I know also that there is to be a limit to the duration of my pains, and when that is reached, You will be bound

[1] Ecclus. xv. 14, 15, 18. [2] Jer. ii. 20.

to forgive me, and make me as happy as those who always loved You. Comforted by such bright prospect, I wish to have my heaven even upon earth. I will then give free scope to my passions, indulge my criminal gratifications, greatly rejoiced by the assurance that to the earthly paradise I now enjoy shall finally succeed the heavenly one, when You will be compelled to put an end to the exercise of Your justice."

According to the upholders of the annihilation theory, a depraved, obstinate sinner could launch against the Almighty a similar defiance, and say: "I do not know how long I am to live here on earth, but I do know that, on account of my wickedness You will have to annihilate my soul when I shall die. I care not for Your eternal heaven in the next world, so long as by indulging my passions I can have my paradise in this."

Now, I ask, shall the outrages against the Lord of Majesty be fully repaired and deservedly punished? On the contrary, such an attitude of sinners would involve the greatest insult, which the most despicable creatures could fling in the face of their Sovereign Creator and Judge. It would be the triumph of human iniquity over God's eternal justice and sheltering crimes under the cloak of impunity.

Belief in the doctrine of endless punishment is so bound up with the entire framework of divine revelation, and so thoroughly fundamental, that to hesitate at its admission is to throw doubt on the belief of all other truths; and to reject it is to reject them all; for it would impeach the veracity of the Revealer. To deny hell is to deny redemption, and with it the salvation of mankind by the Cross of Jesus Christ, which contains the most conspicuous testimony of love and mercy which the Lord of Heaven could give to the poor mortal inhabitants of earth.

551. Belief in God as the rewarder of the just and the avenger of the wicked causes all apparent injustice and disorder to disappear, full harmony is at once established, the history of mankind becomes a great, sublime drama, satisfying both mind and heart. Of this drama the last judgment forms the final act, where all the inequalities of our earthly life are fully accounted for, the wisdom and justice of God's providence are manifested to the whole world, who will exclaim with one voice: "Thou art Just, O Lord, and Thy Judgment is right."[3] This future event was before the mind of the inspired writer when he spoke thus: "I saw under the sun in the place of judgment wickedness, and in the place of justice iniquity. And I said in my heart: God shall judge both the just and the wicked."[4]

Belief in a future life sheds light and happiness; its denial plunges man's mind and heart into gloom and drives him in despair to take refuge in the low enjoyments of this world. The victims of this denial have been graphically described long ago

[3] Ps. cxviii. 137. [4] Eccles. iii. 16, 17.

in the Book of Wisdom, "Let us enjoy the good things that are present. Let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered." [5]

REMARK XVII

The statements contained in this remark show what is the *sensus ecclesiae*, the sentiment of the Church, regarding the following doctrinal points:

1. The duration of future punishment;
2. The exclusion of all future probation theories;
3. The penalty of mortal personal sin.

552. The Twentieth Ecumenical Council, called the Vatican Council, held its first session at the expiration of the year 1869, and its last in July of the year 1870. It is not considered as closed, but only temporarily suspended; that is, prorogued, *propter iniquitatem temporum*, owing to our adverse times.

From a reliable authority, soon to be cited, I learned that, among the points to be proposed to the deliberations of that honorable assembly, there was a schema, or program covering several questions regarding future retribution. I will here transcribe the contemplated discussion on matters strictly connected with our present subject:

"The Fathers assembled in this Council, fully aware of the fact that, in our times, the truth of eternal punishment is boldly denied and wholly rejected by many ministers of the sectarian creeds that divide Christendom, had prepared, through the Commission De Fide (concerning Faith), the following Canon: 'If some should say that man can, even after death, recover sanctifying grace, and should deny that the pains of the reprobates in hell are to be eternal, let him be anathema.'"

This Canon is then further explained: "As the Catholic Church teaches that there are no sins, however grievous, whose forgiveness men cannot obtain from the infinite merits of Christ, our God and Saviour, through sincere repentance and the power of sacramental grace, so adhering to the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and of the Fathers, and of the Catholic Church herself, we teach and define that, after the period of the present life, when men shall have reached the place of retribution; where each one shall receive what he has deserved, during his earthly life, either good or evil,[6] there will be no time left for pardon of deadly sins through any available penance or expiation; but for each mortal offense, with which human souls appear stained before God, the Supreme Judge, an everlasting punishment shall be allotted, as the Eternal Judge Himself testifies, saying: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire." [7] "Hence we condemn as heretical both the doctrine of those who deny that the pains of the reprobates in hell are everlasting, and of those who should

[5] Wis. ii. 6, 8. [6] 2 Cor. v. 10. [7] Matt. xxv. 41.

say that there are some mortal sins, the expiation and forgiveness of which, can be hoped for after death; on which account those, who should depart from this life, stained with such guilt, will not incur eternal damnation."[8]

It is plain that we do not quote these pronouncements as explicit, official definitions of faith by the Fathers of the Vatican Council, since no public discussion was held and no vote taken upon them. We propose them, however, simply to show what is the *sensus ecclesiae*, the sentiment of the Church on those subjects in our times, which history proves to be in perfect harmony with the tradition of the past. Hence we have every reason to believe that the doctrine here referred to will sooner or later be dogmatically defined either by a General Council or by a Pontifical Act.

REMARK XVIII

553. As to the attitude of reason toward the doctrine of eternal punishment, we state that the divine revelation of that dogma being once demonstrated, human reason, when calmly consulted, can assign several arguments to show the justice, fitness, and moral advantages of the endless pains inflicted on the wicked in the future world. This is the view generally held by Catholic theologians, such as Suarez, Lessius, Jungmann, Knoll, Hurter, Mazzella, Passaglia, Chr. Pesch, Perrone and others.

Father Joseph Hontheim, S.J., in his able article on hell published in the Catholic Encyclopedia, thus speaks on this question: "Many believe that reason cannot give any conclusive proof for the eternity of the pains of hell, but that it can merely show that this doctrine does not involve any contradiction. Since the Church has made no decision on this point, each one is entirely free to embrace this opinion. As is apparent, the author of this article does not hold it."[9]

The late Father Sanctus Schiffini, S. J., one of the most distinguished philosophers and theologians of our times, agrees with the aforementioned Father Hontheim, S. J., and proposes to himself the following question:

"Can natural reason prove the eternity of hell?" He answers it affirmatively and proceeds to prove it substantially as follows:

1. Mortal sin is in itself an irreparable evil, because contrary to the last end of human life, being an act of aversion from God, immutable, infinite good, and a turning to creatures, which the sinner prefers to Him. This constitutes a guilt that, being irreparable, becomes perpetual. Now it is reasonable that the punishment should last as long as the guilt caused by sin will last, that is, perpetually. Here we consider the condition of a soul

[8] Hurter, Compendium Theologiae Dogmaticae, vol. iii, p. 513, in nota.
[9] Cath. Enc., vol. vii, p. 209.

that has departed from this life in the state of mortal sin.

2. Another proof is derived from the gravity of the mortal offense on account of the formal or at least virtual or implicit, contempt which it involves of the infinite majesty of God. On this account it contracts a kind of infinite malice; which could not be expiated or repaired by a mere creature through good works, no matter how excellent and how indefinitely multiplied.

3. Moreover, it is highly proper and just that grievous sins should be visited by such punishment as will cause men to entertain the greatest fear of offending God's Supreme Majesty. Now the infliction of a limited, temporary penalty would not suffice to induce men to realize the gravity of the divine offense. Hence the reason why such penalty should be eternal.[10]

REMARK XIX

554. As the heretical doctrine of Origen has again been revived in our times by the so-called neo-Origenists, our modern advocates of Restitutionalism, we deem it advisable to give a brief notice of this extraordinary man, and of the principal errors which the Church condemned. From these statements it will appear that the recent upholders of his chief erroneous doctrine were anathematized long ago.

Origen was born of Christian parents, probably at Alexandria in Egypt, in the year 185 or 186. He owed his first training and excellent religious formation to his father Leonides, who suffered martyrdom in the persecution of Septimius Severus, in the year 202. He won the admiration of his contemporaries in the threefold character of teacher, writer, and preacher. Several of his voluminous writings have reached us and fill the readers with wonder at the extraordinary learning and erudition of this remarkable man. When the Decian persecution broke out, he was arrested and cast into prison, where he underwent many tortures, but his courage was unshaken, and from his prison he wrote numerous letters breathing the spirit of the martyrs. He died at Tyr, aged 69, probably as a victim of the sufferings he endured during the persecution; hence he was buried with honor as a Confessor of the Faith. With the purest intention of winning over to the Church the educated circles of Hellenism, he undertook the task of harmonizing Hellenic philosophy with the faith of the Church. But the Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism with which his mind was imbued from his earliest years unhappily betrayed him into many errors, both against sound philosophy and revealed truths. His principal errors are the following:

A. In the Trinity the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Logos, the Son, who in turn is inferior to the Father.

[10] Disputationes Metaphysicae Specialis, vol. i, p. 435.

B. The angelic spirits and the human souls were all created from eternity and in a state of equal perfection.

C. There will be a final restitution, when all the demons and the reprobate human creatures will be saved and completely transformed.

D. But this restitution cannot be said to be final, for, according to another capital error of Origen, there will be an evolution moving on endlessly between sin and repentance, between apostasy from God and return to Him; an ever-changing condition, from which none of the blessed will be exempted.

555. These monstrous errors could not escape the vigilant eye of the Church. The first condemnation was issued by the Synod of Constantinople in the year 543, under the Patriarch Menna. Its Canons, approved by Pope Vigilius, the eastern patriarchs, and many bishops, were held as a profession of the teachings of the Universal Church.[11]

Then the Fifth Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople in the year 553 and ratified by Pope Vigilius, ranked Origen among the heretics.[12] Origen's condemnation took place a considerable time after his death, when his errors, first confined to the Orient, found an echo in the far West. Had the Church spoken during his lifetime, Origen would certainly have submitted to her decision, as we may judge from his sterling character and ardent zeal in the defense of the Christian Faith.

REFERENCES

1. An exhaustive discussion on this subject is to be found in Lessius, vol. iii. p. 473.

2. Bardenhewer's Patrology, Articles on Origen cited in alphabetical index of his work.

3. Manual of Patrology by the Rev. Bernard Schmid, O. S. B.

4. Palmieri, De Deo Creante, p. 253. Nota.

556. In connection with Origen's chief error, the final restitution or liberation of all the inhabitants of the infernal regions, I will here recall the several allied errors that have been devised to replace the Christian dogma on the eternity of hell.

The well-known aphorism, "Truth is one, error is manifold," we find verified in the contradictory tenets of the opponents of that dogma. They may be reduced to the following:

A. Revived Origenism, or the final restoration or restitution, after sufferings of different severity and duration.

B. Universalism, that is, no punishment at all hereafter, but salvation and endless happiness for all, just and sinners.

C. A second trial or probation after death for sinners who failed to secure their happy destiny in the present life.

D. Voluntary or conditional immortality, thus explained by its advocates:

[11] D. Enchiridion, pp. 87, 89.

[12] Ibid., p. 96, can. xi.

He that chooses to do God's will shall be made partaker of a glorious immortality in the heavenly kingdom, through the application of the redeeming merits of Jesus Christ.

On the contrary, he that will transgress God's commandments, and prefer his own rebellious will, shall, after death, be punished by complete annihilation. This absurd, unscriptural theory has been triumphantly refuted by Père Felix, S. J., in his volume "Eternité."

E. Another view of Annihilation, which consists simply in this, that after death the just will enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, and the wicked will be punished by total extinction of their being.

What we have written in the preceding parts of our work, and what we shall say in the ninth one will, no doubt, be found amply sufficient to confute all the above mentioned irrational and unscriptural theories.

We here briefly recall another heretical doctrine regarding the condition of reprobate souls after death. According to Luther the wicked are not finally consigned to hell until the last day at the universal judgment: but their destiny is determined at death, a heresy revived and preached by the late Pastor Russell, who now knows better, wherever he be.

REMARK XX

557. As the reader is aware, we have pointed out on several occasions, in the course of this volume, the fact that eternal damnation is the result of the sinner's own doing. This is acknowledged by each guilty soul at the particular judgment and will be admitted and publicly confessed by all the lost at the universal judgment. This much we learn from the divine prediction recorded in the Book of Wisdom. "Therefore we have erred from the way of truth. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity; but the way of the Lord we have not known."[13] Then both the just and the wicked will exclaim with the Royal Psalmist: "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right."[14]

But this matter is so important that we thought it advisable to make it the subject of a special remark, as this truth forms the very foundation of several arguments directed to the solution of difficulties urged by rationalists and others against the justice of eternal punishment. The sinner, who obstinately resists the opportunities of grace and conversion, can only blame himself for his irreparable ruin, the loss of heavenly happiness and the incurring of untold infernal miseries. The real and ultimate cause of reprobation is not God, but the sinner's perverse will, that deliberately chooses his perpetual woe. St. Bernard uttered a great truth when he said: "Only the perverse

[13] Wis. v. 6, 7. [14] Ps. cxviii. 137.

will of man burns in hell."—"*Hominis tantummodo mala voluntas ardet in inferno.*"

Hence the egregious error of those who, like Calvin and his disciples, look upon damnation as the result of an arbitrary act of God. As St. John Damascene reasons, the antecedent will of the Creator was that all men should be saved and reach their last happy end. St. Paul writes: "God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."[15] He created us to make us sharers of His own infinite happiness, as far as it can be partaken of by creatures,[16] and this for the simple reason that He is essentially good; and, at the same time, He allots punishment to the wicked only because He is just. According to our manner of conceiving the attitude or bearing of the divine attributes toward rational creatures, when considering the objects which God may will *(Dei voluntas ex parte volitorum)*,[17] we see in God two wills, viz., the antecedent will, which is the primary; and the consequent will, which is the secondary.

The first springs radically from God's goodness and moves Him to make us partakers of His own happiness. The second is that of which the sinners themselves are the cause, as by sin they provoke the Lord to punish them by the exercise of His justice. If man, in the full, untrammeled use of his liberty, refuses to obey the Lord, he thereby destroys in his own soul the germ or source of his eternal felicity; he, of his own accord, sets aside the indispensable condition of his own happiness, and, by severing the bond of charity and love that kept him united to His God, he condemns himself to everlasting misery, and becomes the object of divine hatred.

Behold here the fundamental truth, of which we should never lose sight when dealing with the momentous question of the real, final cause, reason, or motive of the sinner's perdition. It is not God that condemns man, but it is man that condemns himself by the abuse of his liberty. A great thinker, probably St. Augustine, expressed this truth in these brief words: "*Deus, de suo bonus, de nostro, justus,*" which may be thus paraphrased: God is the cause of the exercise of divine goodness; man—the sinner—is the cause of the exercise of divine justice. God can propose to Himself in His positive antecedent will the manifestation of His bounty in behalf of His creatures; but, owing to His infinite perfection, He cannot antecedently intend the display of His vindicative justice. He may have the antecedent will of awarding recompense; but His will to punish can only be consequent, that is, following the prevision of man's sin; and if sin is not done away with by repentance, the will to punish is succeeded by actual infliction. Such is substantially the teaching of St. Thomas quoted above.

[15] 1 Tim. ii. 4.

[16] See Part I.

[17] St. Thomas, Summa Theol., p. i. q. xix, art. 6.

558. God, being infinite holiness, would act against His perfection if He did not restore and repair the moral order which He has established when that order is violated by His creatures. Hence He cannot permit that His inalienable rights should be assailed without providing for their maintenance, through the appointment of a penal or punitive sanction. Therefore, we again conclude, it is not on account of any arbitrary decree that Almighty God brings to bear all the rigor of His justice on man's rebellious will, but He does so because such action is imperatively demanded by the rights of His sovereign majesty attacked and trampled upon by the sinner's obstinate will. Now, who is the real cause of God's resorting to the application of punitive sanction; that is, to the infliction of the threatened eternal penalty? Evidently the sinner alone, who by His final impenitence repels from himself God's eternal love. What will he answer to the Supreme Judge, whose bounty has showered upon him both natural and supernatural goods; whose voice has repeatedly called him to repentance by both interior and exterior appeals; whose patience and longanimity have waited for his reconciliation for perhaps forty or fifty years; whose providence has supplied him with all the means of salvation? When called to his accounts what acceptable excuse will he be able to offer? Having refused to co-operate with divine grace in restoring and repairing the moral order, violated by his sin, when it was possible for him to do it by timely repentance, the sinner is compelled after death to restore that order and repair the insults done to God's offended majesty by incurring the punitive sanction. God's foreknowledge perceives the persevering, obstinate rebellion of the sinner's will and his fixed fatal determination of refusing to retract by sorrow the evil he committed. Then we need not be surprised if his just Judge shall have to pronounce the dreadful verdict—guilty. We are justified, then, in concluding once more that it is not God that causes the reprobation of sinners, but the sinners themselves who choose to die impenitent and unshriven.

What sound reason teaches, God's revelation fully confirms, as it appears from the following testimonies:

"God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added His Commandments and precepts. Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him."[18]

"Man shall go into the house of his eternity."[19]

559. The same truth, of the sinner's exclusive responsibility for his final reprobation, may be stated as follows, under the luminous guidance of the Angelic Doctor. The distinction between the antecedent and the consequent will of God may be made in reference to the things which God may wish *(ex parte*

[18] Ecclus. xv. 14, 15, 18. [19] Eccles. xii. 5.

volitorum) but not on the part of the divine will itself, in which there can be neither before nor after *(neque prius, neque posterius)*, that is, neither antecedent nor consequent. Now, the things or objects willed—such as man's eternal salvation—may be considered in themselves, that is, absolutely and independently of particular circumstances, such as the free action of man; then we have, regarding it, God's antecedent will thus expressed by St. Paul: "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." [20] But if we consider the things willed, such as man's eternal salvation, taking into account all particular circumstances, facts, or events, such as man's co-operation or resistance to grace, and his final perseverance in grace or in sin, then we have what is called God's consequent will. The antecedent will is styled by St. John Damascene the will of goodness and mercy; the consequent will is designated by him as the will of justice. Therefore the will of God to punish impenitent sinners is said to be a consequent divine will inasmuch as it implies a decree of damnation issued in consequence of the foreseen, final, deliberate impenitence of the sinner. According to Calvin's horrible creed, adopted by the Westminster Confession of Faith,[21] damnation is the result of God's antecedent will or decree enacted independently of human action and only to the praise of God's glorious justice.[22]

According to the Catholic doctrine, which is diametrically opposed to the foregoing detestable heresy, God may have the antecedent will of awarding recompense, but He cannot, consistently with His attributes of goodness and justice, antecedently intend the mere display of His punitive justice. Hence, according to Catholic teaching, eternal reprobation is the result of God's consequent will, that is, in consequence of man's deliberate rejection of the grace and means of salvation. The preceding considerations will help to understand the two following sentences of St. Thomas: [23] "What God wills by His antecedent will is not always realized; in fact, God wills the salvation and happiness of all men: yet only those are saved who observe His holy law." "What God wills by His consequent will is fully verified." For no created power can oppose the execution of His most just decrees.

The foregoing teaching of the Angelic Doctor is in full accord with his doctrine on predestination, which is briefly as follows: Predestination to eternal glory is twofold, adequate and inadequate. The former comprehends both grace and glory, and when so considered it cannot be said to have been merited, for grace is an entirely gratuitous gift. The latter comprehends

[20] 1 Tim. ii. 4; St. Thomas, p. i. q. xix, art. 6. [21] Chap. III, A. D. 1647.

[22] See Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, vol. iii, pp. 608–611.

[23] In 1 Sent. Dist. xlvi, art. 1; Dist. xlvii, art. 1, 2, 3; In Summa, P. I, q. xix, art. 6, 8.

only the glory and has reference to foreseen merits obtained by co-operation with grace. This is like saying that God preordained that He would give to some one glory in view of his merits; and that he preordained that He would give to some one grace by which he should merit glory.[24]

CHAPTER V

REMARKS XXI TO XXV

REMARK XXI

560. To the criticisms of conditional immortality in Part VIII we add here a fuller refutation by exposing the fallacy of the chief arguments put forth by the Rev. Edward White, Professor of Homiletics in New College, London, lately Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He is held to be the ablest defender of that novel scheme of salvation contained in the three following propositions:

1. "We contend," he says, "that there is no Bible evidence of native immortality in man, that is, immortality by creation.

2. "That the one main design, if not the chief design, of Christ's Incarnation and Redemption work was to confer physical immortality upon those who should believe, and on them only.

3. "That all others who reject the offer of this immortality with the other truths of His Gospel, are condemned to suffer beyond death, and then to be physically destroyed, that is, annihilated."

561. Against the first proposition we argue thus: The reverend divine, quoting many passages from the Bible, must necessarily admit its authority; his attention is accordingly invited to the following texts, whose literal meaning no Biblical scholar of repute has ever denied, and which amply suffice to disprove his first assertion. "God created man to His own image, to the image of God, He created him."[1] It is agreed on all hands that God's image in man resides chiefly in the soul, which, like God, is spiritual, intelligent, and enduring for all eternity. "The Lord breathed in his [man's] face and man became a living soul."[2] "God created man incorruptible [indestructible] and to the image of His own likeness He made him."[3]

These last words of the inspired writer evidently refer to the condition of our first parents in the state of innocence, when, in accordance with the Lord's most benevolent design, their bodies were to be immortal by gift, whilst their souls were created immortal by nature.

Mr. White quotes Ecclesiastes iii. 19, to prove that the soul of man perishes like that of beasts; but he takes good care not

[24] P. I, q. xxiii, art. 3, 5. [1] Gen. i. 27. [2] Ibid., ii. 7. [3] Wis., ii. 23.

to allege, from the same sacred Book, the text that completely nullifies his interpretation of the passage he quotes: "And the dust shall return into its earth from whence it was, and the spirit [the soul] shall return to God, who gave it."[4] The meaning of the text adduced by the Rev. Mr. White (Ecclesiastes iii. 19) has been fully explained in Part III.

Moreover, we may here justly apply the logician's aphorism, "*Quod nimis probat, nihil probat.*"—"What proves too much, proves nothing." In fact, if for argument's sake, we accept Mr. White's interpretation of the text he cites: "Man hath nothing more than the beast," as signifying that, at death, the soul of man ceases to exist, as well as that of the beast, what will follow from it? This inevitable consequence, that there is for all human souls no immortality whatever, neither native immortality by God's creation, nor conditional immortality by Christ's redemption, since they all perish.

562. In the second proposition the reverend gentleman maintains that the chief scope of Christ's coming was to confer physical immortality on believers, and on them only.

Here is our answer: We have already refuted this other assertion of the reverend Congregational minister, for, if, as we proved from the Scripture, physical immortality is the work of creation, the Saviour must have had some other chief design in view at His coming, and such a design as constitutes the principal object of Incarnation and Redemption. He comes indeed to bestow on man the gift of life, but not that of the natural life of the soul, common to all men, to believers as well as unbelievers, but the life of divine grace, the spiritual life of the soul, through which we are united to God by the bonds of friendship and love. This is exactly the most beneficent purpose of His coming. Hence He says in His Gospel: "I am come that they may have life and have it more abundantly";[5] that is, in greater profusion than was vouchsafed to the just of the Old Testament. They were under the reign of law, first natural, then Mosaic. The Christian people are under the law of grace.

And as the spiritual life of grace is incompatible with the presence of sin in man's soul, so the Blessed Redeemer's passion and death were directed to the effacement and destruction of sin. This much we learn from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him [Christ] that the body of sin may be destroyed."[6]

A similar thought is conveyed to us by these words of St. John the Evangelist: "And you know that He [Christ] appeared to take away our sins." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity."[7]

[4] Eccles. xii. 7. [5] John x. 10. [6] Rom. vi. 6.
[7] 1 John i. 9 (see also Matt. i. 21).

In other words, our Blessed Saviour, through the sacraments which He instituted and left to His Church, restores to us the life of grace, the spiritual life of the soul, whenever it is lost, actually destroyed by mortal sin. "Sin," says St. James, "when it is completed [that is, fully assented to] begetteth death."[8]

"For she that liveth in pleasures," says St. Paul, "is dead while she is living."[9] The Apostle here speaks of a life addicted to unlawful, sensual pleasures, such as kill, destroy the life of grace in the soul. The same interpretation must be obviously applied to these other words of St. Paul: "The wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord."[10]

It is perfectly true that death in the state of grace, free from deadly sin, brings with it the assurance of a blessed immortality; that is, the eternal happiness promised to the just; but this fact does not imply what our clerical opponent assumes; namely, the conferring of the gift of physical immortality, which, as we have shown above, is the result not of Redemption, but of creation.

563. We come now to the third proposition, according to which all unbelievers rejecting the offer of conditional, physical immortality, after undergoing some sufferings in the next world, are finally destroyed, that is, annihilated by God.

Our reply is as follows: In the first place, the attentive reader must not have failed to notice how utterly illogical is Mr. White's reasoning. In fact, if, according to his interpretation of Ecclesiastes iii. 19, man's soul fares no better at death than that of the beast, for it perishes, dies with the body, what need is there of annihilation, and how is it possible for the souls of unbelievers to suffer punishment, since they cease to exist when their bodies die? But to dispose of the utterly absurd and unscriptural annihilation scheme, so warmly defended by the reverend gentleman, we have only to recall what we read in the Apocalypse of sinners enduring punishment in the next world: "And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them."[11] I am fully aware of the fact that among the Scriptural texts alleged by the advocates of conditional immortality and the so-called Destructionists, to prove the annihilation theory, that of St. Matthew's Gospel is looked upon as by far the strongest: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell."[12] Of course, the word "destroy" is here assumed by our adversaries as synonymous with the term "annihilate." This is a vain subterfuge. For, first of all, if by destruction, annihilation is meant, what need was there of the

[8] James i. 15. [9] 1 Tim. v. 6. [10] Rom. vi. 23.
[11] Apoc. ix. 6. [12] Matt. x. 28.

final words "in hell"? The right interpretation of the whole text is easily deduced from those final words "in hell." They signify not the blotting out of existence of both soul and body of the wicked, but the utter ruin and awful catastrophe of both. First, of the soul condemned and consigned to the pains of hell immediately after death; and secondly, they point out the terrible lot awaiting the bodies of the wicked likewise in hell after the final resurrection, the resurrection unto judgment threatened by Christ to evil-doers in St. John's Gospel: "They that have done evil shall come forth unto the resurrection of judgment."[13]

But there is still another answer to disprove the interpretation of our opponents. We find it in a parallel text of St. Luke's Gospel, which shows plainly the correct meaning of a similar passage in St. Matthew's Gospel, the one adduced by the upholders of annihilation. Thus spoke Christ: "And I say to you, My friends; be not afraid of them who kill the body, and, after that, they have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear; fear ye Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him."[14]

564. In an article in the "Clerical Symposium,"[15] the Rev. John Cairns, D.D., says many good things in refutation of White's conditional immortality, but he is greatly mistaken when he states that Plato in his *Phaedo* held the final destruction of the soul. The renowned Greek philosopher, whose text I have consulted, says nothing of the kind. On the contrary, both in his *Phaedo, Gorgias, Laws,* and in his *De Republica,* also called *De Civitate,* he definitely teaches the truth of the soul's immortality and of future retribution. See appropriate quotations in Parts III, VI and VII.

565. The announcement of Mr. White's theory of voluntary immortality found a sympathetic echo with several Protestant ministers of the liberal school. But other divines, on seeing the old creed thus reduced to tatters, came to the rescue, and, to save it from utter destruction, undertook to combat the novel view by showing that it was entirely opposed to the traditional belief of the preceding eighteen centuries of the Christian era. At this juncture Catholic writers stepped in and denied to them the right to appeal to tradition, as they had discarded it as evidence of no value in deciding religious questions. This feature revealed to the public the embarrassing and inconsistent position of the preachers who, in their plight, attempted to resort to an argument which the early reformers as well as themselves had rejected as futile.

Only Catholic apologists, armed with the twofold weapon of Scripture and Tradition, expounded by an infallible authority,

[13] John v. 29.
[14] Luke xii. 4, 5. See Clerical Symposium, p. 220.
[15] See article x, p. 203.

can successfully cope with the advocates of voluntary immortality or with any other opponents of Christian, Catholic truths.

REMARK XXII

No one can exclude sensitive pain as an integral part of the sufferings of the reprobate creatures, whether angelic or human, without running counter to Holy Scripture, the general consent of the Fathers, and the explicit teaching of the Catholic Church.

566. When we stated that the common opinion of theologians upholds the view we have defended regarding the chief sensitive torment of hell, which consists in the awful pain caused by a real fire, whatever be its nature, we were fully aware of the fact that, even in our times, some well-meaning Catholic writers advocate a milder doctrine regarding eternal punishment. Theirs are the few dissonant notes, which, however, like the shadows in paintings, only bring the opposite truth into bolder relief. As we say in Latin, *canunt extra chorum.* In my researches I met only two such advocates and both of them think of strengthening their position by a quotation from the Dogmatic Theology of the late Most Reverend Francis Kenrick, former Archbishop of Philadelphia. I admit that the following words quoted from his Tractatus XIX, ch. iii, though somewhat ambiguous, seem to lend countenance to that milder view of hell, which excludes the infliction of sensitive pain on the part of God. "It is sufficient," writes Kenrick, "to regard the suffering as proceeding from the condition in which sinners are placed, as being remote from the kingdom of heaven. It is not necessary to conceive of God positively inflicting pain."

Here we venture to remark that, if another passage in the same chapter had been adverted to, the Catholic theologians to whom I refer, would most likely have refrained from citing Archbishop Kenrick as favorable to their view. These are his words: "*Constat poenam summam vehementemque cruciatum utraque voce ignis et vermis designari,*" which in plain English read: "It is plain that by both these terms, 'fire' and 'worm,' are designated a very great pain and a fierce torment." That the Latin word *cruciatus* means a real, sensitive torment, we also learn from the tormenting thirst of the rich man in hell: "*Crucior in hac flamma.*"—"I am tormented in this flame."[16]

It is clear that this second statement of Archbishop Kenrick can scarcely be reconciled with the first, which says that "It is not necessary to conceive of God positively inflicting pain," for the torment mentioned in the second citation is certainly inflicted by God through the instrumentality of secondary causes, the action of fire in particular. If we exclude all sensitive afflictions, then there will be in hell only the pain of loss, the for-

[16] Luke xvi. 24.

feiture of heavenly happiness, a doctrine diametrically opposed to the whole tradition of Christendom, the authority of the Fathers, and the overwhelming majority of Catholic theologians with St. Thomas at their head. Supplem. p. iii. q. 97. Summa Contra Gent. l. iii. c. 145. Explaining this chapter, St. Thomas quotes the words of Christ: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels,"[17] and then adds, "By this sentence is excluded the opinion of Algazel, who held that the only punishment incurred by sinners was the loss of their last end," that is, the forfeiture of heavenly happiness.

567. One of the two writers I am speaking of quotes in his favor Father Taparelli, S. J., the renowned Italian author of the "Essay on Natural Right." These are the words translated from the Italian original: "From what has been said, it appears that the punishment is not a torment of the sensitive man, but a recoil of order against disorder." Here Father Taparelli did not mean to exclude all sensitive pain as an instrument of punishment, but he only intended to state the fact that, both in the human and in the divine government, the principal purpose, aim, or object of punishment is the vindication, restoration, or reparation of order violated by the infraction of either human or divine law, as the case may be. This is the principal end of every rational punishment: whilst the actual infliction of pain is resorted to as a means. Hence Father Taparelli on the alleged passage says: "Vindicative justice, therefore, far from being a blind impetus of passion, is founded on the essential tendency of truth and order, which constitutes the very nature of human intelligence demanding a violent return to that order which has been disturbed by some misdeed." And when it is a question of the disturbance of the divinely established moral order by a transgression of God's laws, the punishment is inflicted on the offender also as a justly due reparation of the injury done to God's infinite majesty. Any other interpretation of the learned Jesuit moralist would involve the absurd conclusion that all inflictions of sensitive pains cannot be looked upon as legitimate and rational punishment, either in the human or in the divine order. Hence the author of the "Essay on Natural Right," to be consistent with the significance attributed to his words, should have entirely omitted the pages devoted to the discussion of the civil penalties allotted to criminals by judicial courts. This consequence would imply an application of the logicians' principle: "*Quod nimis probat, nihil probat.*"—"What proves too much, proves nothing."

The only motive that induced us to write this additional remark is the desire of preventing our opponents from supporting their erroneous theories by quoting Catholic authors apparently favor-

[17] Matt. xxv. 41.

able to their views, though their sentiments may be thoroughly orthodox.

REMARK XXIII

568. Can the demons and the separated reprobate souls suffer sensitive pains? As Catholic philosophy teaches us, the soul, when separated from the body by death, cannot exercise the operations of sensitive life, because such operations do not proceed from the soul alone, but from the human compound, which is their subjective receptacle. Hence these operations cease with death, as they cannot be performed independently of bodily organs. Such is the doctrine of St. Thomas in P. I, q. lxxvii, art. 8; and in Suppl. P. III. q. lxx. art. 1, 2, 3. However, from this doctrine, as the same Angelic Doctor observes in the third article of the last quotation, it does not follow that the separated souls of the reprobates do not feel sensitive pain from hell's fire, for if such affliction is experienced by the fallen angels, for whom, as Christ tells us, that fire was prepared,[18] there appears no reason why the condemned souls should not likewise suffer from the infernal flames.

Moreover, as hell's fire is the instrument of divine justice for the punishment of sin, that torment can be made to act independently of natural conditions, God's power supplying the absence of the corporeal organs, since the instrument acts not only through its inherent power, but also through the power of the chief agent, which is, in our case, divine punitive justice.[19]

The preceding reflections are fully confirmed by the authority of two distinguished Fathers.

St. Augustine writes: "The souls of the reprobates are tormented by hell's fire in true, though wonderful, mysterious manners."[20]

St. Gregory the Great, treating of the same question says: "If the devil and his angels, who are incorporeal, are tormented by a corporeal fire, what wonder if the souls, before resuming their bodies, can feel bodily pains?"[21]

Demons are now allowed by divine permission to come out of hell and roam throughout the earth to tempt men, and molest the just as a test of their virtue, and an occasion of merit; but it is certain that, wherever they may be, they are never free from their torments. The same must be said of the reprobate souls if, by divine permission, they are allowed temporarily to quit their infernal abode.[22]

[18] Matt. xxv. 41. [19] See St. Thomas, Suppl. p. iii, q. 97, art. 5 ad 3um.
[20] Enchiridion Patr., p. 653. [21] Ibid., p. 812.
[22] St. Thomas, Suppl. p. iii, q. 70, art. 3 ad 8um.

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REMARK XXIV

569. No one can call in question or deny the principle that all metaphorical, ambiguous, equivocal, obscure language is to be sedulously avoided when the expressions used are intended to state a definite truth, to proclaim a certain law, to pronounce a decision, or to deliver a judicial sentence. If such are the requirements imposed by natural reason and equity on human writers, legislators, and judges, we must, for higher motives, affirm that Christ, the Son of God, the Supreme Lawgiver and Sovereign Judge of mankind, in pronouncing the final sentence on the wicked, must have acted in full conformity with the above principle of rational justice, and employed a language utterly incapable of and opposed to any metaphorical interpretation. Hence the words with which Christ concludes His description of the last judgment, must be taken in their obvious, literal sense; meaning, therefore, endless reward to the elect and endless penalty to the reprobates. "And these [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just, into life everlasting." [23]

In this connection we are fully aware of the interminable discussions held on the Greek and Hebrew nouns and adjectives employed to signify endless duration. We also well know the desperate efforts made by rationalistic Biblical interpreters to nullify their meaning as applied in Holy Scripture to the duration of hell's punishment. But leaving aside, for the present, all such discussion, we find an irrefutable argument in favor of the eternal duration of punitive sanction in the striking passage of Our Saviour's discourse recorded in St. Mark's Gospel where the eternal duration of future punishment is asserted not by the word "eternity," or the adjective "everlasting," but by denying that it will ever end: by asserting that hell's fire is unquenchable, and the worm, the remorse of conscience, is undying. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." [24] Let the quibblers about the meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words referred to above refute this argument based on St. Mark's text if they can.

A forcible argument, or a theological proof based on God's revelation, may be framed as follows: Actual, mortal sin, according to the divine ordinance, can be canceled, that is, forgiven, only in the present life. This can be done either by sacramental absolution, or, if recourse to sacramental penance is not available or possible, by an act of perfect contrition prompted chiefly by God's love. If neither of these means or divine provisions has been applied, mortal sin remains unforgiven, and shall be punished as long as it shall last, that is, forever.

A similar argument is taken from St. Thomas and thus ex-

[23] Matt. xxv. 46. [24] Mark ix. 43.

pressed: Whoever sins mortally is thereby deprived at once of sanctifying grace and made amenable to eternal punishment. The recovery of this grace is absolutely necessary for the forgiveness of sin, and the deliverance of the sinner from incurring the merited penalty. If the sinner dies unshriven and unrepentant, he will remain forever stained with grievous guilt, as after death he is utterly incapable of recovering the forfeited grace by the removal of sin. Now so long as the sin lasts, the sinner remains subject to its punishment and he is therefore eternally damned.[25]

REMARK XXV

570. Many a page of history records unexpiated crimes so enormous in their cruelty and malice as to convince the most superficial mind of the necessity of such a punishment as would restrain men from similar excesses. We read of ruthless tyrants who united the most refined barbarity against innocent victims to a life of unspeakable debauchery. Thousands of innocent human creatures died an ignominious death, marked with the brand of shame, even to their grave, whilst their traducers and persecutors were held in reverence to the last, many of them departing from this life with blasphemy on their lips. Has any earthly punishment befallen them? Is it conceivable that such monsters of iniquity will have nothing to fear from the anger of the Supreme Judge, whose laws they trampled upon, and whose majesty they publicly outraged and defied? Where would right and justice be if there were no other world, with no heaven for the tortured victims of impiety, and with no hell for cruel and licentious tyrants? Shall there be no distinction between the just and the wicked, between the saints and the sinners?

[25] St. Thomas in II Sentent., dist. xxxvii, art. 5; Mark iii. 29.—"Guilty of an everlasting sin."

PART IX

OBJECTIONS AGAINST ETERNAL PUNISHMENT AND THEIR SOLUTION

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

571. I. The remarks in Part VIII have been inserted with a view to anticipate several of the leading difficulties commonly adduced against that dogma, and to supply the reader with such principles as are deemed available for their solution. It is evident that our limited space will not allow us to refer to all the objections raised by our opponents against this Article of Christian Faith.

This, however, is not necessary, for as a distinguished writer in the *Dublin Review* [1] wisely remarks, "we are not bound to solve all the difficulties that may be urged against a given thesis which is abundantly proved by such argument as cannot be refuted. Even in matters of physical science no one expects that. There are difficulties against the law of gravitation itself which have not as yet been solved; yet no one thinks of doubting the existence of that law. If the objection amounted to an evident demonstration that a certain proposition was self-contradictory, that is to say, in the language of the schools, metaphysically impossible, we should then be obliged to abandon the thesis. But if the difficulty is plainly one which we cannot solve, merely for want of sufficient information, right reason will only bid us wait, and not necessarily doubt." Thus, as Lessius remarks,[2] the chief reason why some difficulty is experienced regarding the punishment of mortal sin by eternal pains lies in the fact of our deficient knowledge of the exceeding gravity of sin, and of the infinite holiness of God, against whom it is committed.

572. II. Joseph de Maistre, the renowned statesman, writes: "When a truth of the natural order, or a dogma of divine revelation is thoroughly demonstrated, no objection, however forcible, can disprove it. For, so long as the arguments on which the demonstration is based are not refuted, the truth remains untouched, and all the difficulties raised against it, if they cannot

[1] January, 1881, p. 139. [2] Lib. xiii, nn. 163, 187.

be completely answered, will simply prove the incapacity of our mind, but they cannot convince us of the error of the doctrine or truths concerned."[3] Now, our readers will admit that our thesis on the existence and everlasting duration of hell's punishment has been fully demonstrated from the testimonies of divine revelation, the authority of the Catholic Church, the belief of the Protestant and schismatic churches, the witnesses of Christian tradition, the testimony of the martyrs, and the general consent of mankind. And sound reason, besides alleging no valid argument against it, furnishes, as we show, many confirmatory proofs. If the preceding observations are borne in mind, it will appear that the divinely revealed doctrine of endless punishment in the world to come has nothing to fear from any objections raised against it. As Cardinal Newman says in his "Grammar of Assent," "Ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt."

573. III. Our present task is to examine the principal difficulties raised by unbelievers and other opponents against the doctrine of hell's eternity, and to furnish such answers as will prove fully satisfactory, we hope, to every fair-minded man, to any one, we mean, who, free from prejudice and open to conviction, is desirous of attaining the truth on this weighty, divinely revealed doctrine.

The dogma of the eternity of hell's torments is certainly the most terrific among the truths proclaimed by divine revelation—an article of faith which has aroused the most violent rebellion aganist it, not only from the ranks of the infidel world, but also from men who claim to be staunch believers and supporters of the Gospel and religion of Christ. Convinced, as we are, that all their difficulties can be satisfactorily solved, we will not hesitate to state them in all their bald language and apparent strength, without belittling their argumentative value, whatever that may be. It is needless to remark that we are here dealing not with imaginary, but with real difficulties to be met with in the works of infidels, Unitarians and other adversaries of this Christian dogma.

574. IV. The foregoing observations may be further developed by bearing in mind the following rule or principle of sound logic: There is a great difference between an insoluble question regarding some truth and an insoluble objection against a proposed doctrine.

An objection is held to be insoluble against a given doctrine when it is shown that the terms of the controverted proposition are incompatible, incoherent, that is, self-destructive or contradictory. Thus, by proving that matter cannot think because of its inertia, we oppose to the teaching of the materialists an insoluble objection by showing that it implies contradictory terms,

[3] Soirées de St. Petersburg, vol. i, p. 256.

such as activity on the part of thought, and inertia on the part of matter, two ideas completely irreconcilable.

An insoluble question occurs when we endeavor to harmonize two truths, whose mutual reconciliation may be difficult to understand. It is plain that the insoluble objection is derived from the clear idea of the opposition of the terms, whilst the insoluble question springs from the imperfect or limited knowledge of the terms in which it is proposed. The insoluble objection comes into direct collision with the claims of reason; and, as it cannot be satisfactorily answered, it remains victorious, as it shows that the statement advanced is false and absurd.

The insoluble question arises not from the presence of contradictory terms, but from the ignorance or limited knowledge of our reasoning faculties regarding the subject with which we are dealing. Hence we are quite right in rejecting a doctrine proved false by an insoluble objection raised against it; but we should be entirely wrong in refusing to admit an apparently insoluble question. Thus, we may experience some difficulty in reconciling human liberty with divine foreknowledge, but we should not be justified in denying either.

To cite an example that more directly concerns us at this point of our work, some difficulty is experienced in reconciling these two truths; namely, the eternal punishment of the wicked with the infinite goodness of God, who inflicts it. Father Lessius remarks, as noticed above, that the difficulty springs chiefly from the fact of our deficient knowledge of the gravity of mortal sin, and of the infinite holiness of God offended by it.[4]

Thus, both from human reason and divine revelation, we learn that God is infinitely wise, just, and good; and the same divine revelation assures us that He inflicts eternal punishment on the wicked that die impenitent. No doubt whatever can be rationally entertained on either of those truths, though a greater or lesser difficulty may be experienced in reconciling those divine attributes with the everlasting penalty of the reprobates. Therefore, though the question we speak of may appear to some investigators to be insoluble, yet they cannot be justified in rejecting it as untrue and absurd or repugnant to reason.

575. It is an obvious fact that it is much easier to pull down than to build up. Hence a wrecking-crew will, in a few days, level to the ground a house or palace which it may have taken many months to construct. Something like this occurs in controversy. Opponents bent on disproving and rejecting some unwelcome truths, will in a few words advance gratuitous assertions and bold denials that will require several pages to refute, and this for the following reason: Erroneous statements and false theories cannot be triumphantly confuted unless the adversary's sophisms are exposed, and the principles and truths

[4] Lib. xiii, c. xxv.

called in question defended, so as to close all avenues of escape and cut the ground from under the opponent's feet.

Such being the argumentative method we have adopted, the intelligent reader will not be surprised at seeing that our replies are considerably more lengthy than the objections. A simpleton [the other term beginning with f is unparliamentary] may put a question which it will take all the learning of the seven wise men of Greece to answer.

CHAPTER II

A DIALOGUE: ITS REASONS AND METHOD

576. It has been thought advisable to present the difficulties and objections against the dogma of eternal punishment and their solution in the form of a kind of Socratic dialogue between two interlocutors, a Parishioner and an old Curate. The Parishioner, a fairly well instructed and well-meaning practical Catholic, is the owner and manager of a city hotel, well patronized and frequented by different classes of people, business men, bankers, lawyers, physicians, school teachers, clergymen of different denominations, university professors, society ladies, tourists, etc. To be sociable with his guests he must, of course, spend some time with them in the lobby or in the spacious parlors. He finds, on these occasions, that the conversation often turns on religious topics, and his Catholic faith, if not weakened, is at times, at least, considerably shaken and disturbed by the strange, unchristian things he has to hear. He has also observed that the question of future retribution, and particularly the Catholic doctrine on hell and its eternity, is frequently brought up. The flippant talker seems to have the monopoly of the discussion, and he generally takes the negative side of that vexed question. He has also noticed that only very seldom some timid characters venture to dissent. He regrets that more than once he was at a loss how to answer some pretty tough objections. At all events, when nearly cornered by some clever disputant, he would manage to extricate himself from the embarrassing situation by acting on the advice of the Curate, an old friend of his, who, in a lecture on the evidences of the Catholic religion, told his parishioners how to answer and silence those who should attack their faith.

577. "It is true," said the Curate on that occasion, "that all Catholics should know their Catechism and endeavor to retain what they have learned and also to improve their knowledge by attending church regularly, listening to the sermons and instructions, and by reading Catholic books and subscribing for Catholic journals, magazines, etc. Those, however, who have the

leisure, the ability, and the means, ought to strive to increase their knowledge of our holy religion so as to become more and more confirmed in their faith, which, on account of their social position, may be more frequently attacked.

"But, it may be asked: What about our lay people, laborers, workers in factories, mothers of families, business men, clerks, or even professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, etc? Are they bound to make such a study of our religion as would fit them to defend it against all assailants, and to solve all the difficulties raised by our opponents?

"No; by no means. First of all, in the majority of cases, such a study would be practically impossible: and, even when possible, there is no obligation to undertake it. Divine Providence has adopted a far wiser plan. A special class of men are set aside for that task; the members of the Teaching Church, the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, who, consecrated to the service of God and of His Church, are the divinely appointed religious teachers of men. On this account, one of their chief duties is the study of the Faith, and its explanation and defense. The grace of vocation is the surest guarantee of the heavenly help they need to discharge those obligations with success. The result proves that they have been faithful to their task.

"Speaking now only of the Christian era, we may say, without fear of contradiction from any quarter, that most of the immense literature devoted to the exposition and defense of our Faith is the production of the members of the hierarchy—Popes, bishops, and priests. Their numberless works, covering the whole field of religious knowledge, fill the libraries of the civilized world and constitute a vast arsenal, supplying, in every language spoken by man, weapons for repelling every attack, past, present, and future. Hence the reason why the Lord thus speaks through His prophet Malachias: 'The lips of the priests shall keep knowledge, and they [the people] shall seek the law at his mouth; because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.'[1] And in the New Testament we find that among the counsels given by St. Paul to Timothy bishop of Ephesus, the principal are those which concern the necessity for prelates and priests of the study and defense of the Faith. Thus, in his first letter to him, his convert and disciple, he writes: 'Take heed to thyself and to doctrine; be earnest in them. For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.'[2]

578. "Neither must we overlook the fact that it is to His ministers that Christ made the solemn promise of divine assistance, particularly when they should be summoned before the civil magistrates to justify their preaching of His Gospel. 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist or gainsay.'[3]

[1] Malach. ii. 7. [2] 1 Tim. iv. 16. [3] Luke xxi. 15.

579. "What, then," the Curate pertinently continued, "have our Catholic laity to do when outsiders, Protestants or infidels, misrepresent and attack their faith? They must resort to what is called the Indirect Demonstration. They should refer their questioners and inquiries to the authority of the Church, to the doctrine of theologians and their writings; an appeal very effective and placed within the reach of all. The answer might be given in the following terms:

"'I am perfectly convinced and sure of the truth which the Catholic Church teaches and I feel exceedingly happy in possessing this truth. But although I am not sufficiently learned to furnish all the proof and explanations which you demand, yet I know that complete and rigorous demonstrations have been given by the most learned men from the time of the apostles to our own days. These demonstrations exist in numberless Catholic books. Our priests are always ready to expound our doctrine to any one that chooses to call on them for that purpose. If you really desire to know the truth and to be instructed by competent teachers, you will not hesitate to follow my advice and consult some Catholic priest, a step which you will be willing to take if you recall these two Scriptural incidents regarding converts to the Faith: First, that of Saul who, struck down near Damascus, exclaimed: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said to him. Arise and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do."[4] Secondly, that of Philip, the Deacon, asking the eunuch who returning from Jerusalem was reading the prophet Isaias: "Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest? Who said: And how can I unless some man show me?"'[5]

"As in civil society, doctors will not undertake to solve legal problems, and lawyers will refrain from prescribing medicines for the sick, so in the Catholic Church the lay members are not expected to master the science of theology and pose as teachers of religion. They know, however, that the Saviour of the world, by founding His Church and instituting the priesthood, has made ample provision for the preservation and defense of our holy Faith, and thus furnished to the world very competent teachers of the most necessary science, the science of salvation.

"As we learn from St. Bede and other Fathers, the Apostle St. Peter, when he wrote that the faithful should be prepared to give a reason of their faith and hope, He did not mean to impose on them the obligation of disputing with heretics, but simply desired that they should always bear in mind the authority of the Church, the pillar and ground of truth, who is protected against error in her teaching by the assistance of the Holy Ghost."[6]

[4] Acts ix. 6, 7. [5] Ibid. viii. 29, 30.

[6] I Peter iii.15. See comment of Cornelius à Lapide.

580. After this necessary digression, we return to our Parishioner. Anxious to know how the several objections he heard against the endless duration of future punishment should be answered, he wrote down some of the most startling and arranged with the Curate for a series of interviews, in which he intended to propose them and learn the answers for his own personal and private instruction, and he expressed a wish that they might be published for the benefit of others. Hence the origin of the following dialogue.

It is scarcely necessary for me to inform the reader that the several incidents and circumstances connected with the framing of the dialogue are purely fictitious, though neither improbable nor impossible. But what is extremely important for me to remark is the fact that the difficulties and objections proposed by the Parishioner to the Curate are far from being fictitious. They are contained in books, they are heard in lecture-halls, they appear in the daily press, they are seen in more pretentious publications such as monthly magazines and quarterly reviews. This is the antichristian, infidel literature that is spread throughout the length and breadth of the land to poison, pervert, and ruin countless souls.

CHAPTER III

DIFFICULTIES I TO VII

DIFFICULTY I

581. PARISHIONER.—This is what one of the gentlemen—a guest—said: "If the punishment of the wicked is to be eternal, then it would follow that they will never attain that eternal happiness for which they felt an irresistible craving. Hence that natural desire, implanted in man's mind and heart by God Himself, in their case will be forever frustrated. Now is it not plainly absurd, nay, unjust, that such tendencies and aspirations imprinted in every individual of the human race by God's infinite wisdom and goodness should never be realized?"

582. CURATE.—Those who allege this difficulty evidently base their reasoning on a false supposition. They suppose that the primary, nay, the only end for which God created man was to make him happy in the world to come. This view, however, is not theologically true, for God, in bringing the rational creatures into existence, had two ends in view: one primary and absolute, the other secondary and conditional. The primary end, the one which God Almighty must and will infallibly obtain, even in spite of the creature's rebellion against the divine law, was His extrinsic glory resulting from the exterior manifestation of His

divine attributes and perfections, such as wisdom, goodness, mercy, power, and justice. The secondary end, we admit, was the perfection and happiness of man, the attainment of which from the nature of the case, is essentially conditional, being made dependent on the spontaneous co-operation of all rational creatures capable of free acts of obedience to the divine will. Therefore, with regard to the reprobates, it is they that wilfully deprive themselves of their happiness. Hence, as St. Augustine remarks,[1] the wicked, by their own final impenitence or death in the state of grievous sin, rob themselves of the greatest goods, and plunge themselves into the abyss of the greatest evils; and will, in their torments, proclaim the power and justice of God, whose mercy and goodness they despised and rejected whilst it was within their reach in the present life; and, seeing the evident justice of their punishment, they will be compelled to exclaim: "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right."[2] Thus the insults flung in the face of God's infinite majesty by obstinate sinners are fully repaired, and the violated moral order completely vindicated and restored. For a fuller understanding of the doctrine of the Catholic Church on the end of man, a doctrine resting on the authority of divine revelation, see Introduction and Part I. (See n. **557.**)

DIFFICULTY II

583. PARISHIONER.—This is what I heard from a lawyer, who, arguing from a legal point of view, said: "Among the reasons I have for not admitting the dogma of hell's eternity there is this: I see no equity or just proportion between an offense committed in a few seconds or minutes, perhaps, and the duration of its punishment, which will never end."

584. CURATE.—Here our opponent evidently speaks of a proportion of duration. But does justice, whether human or divine, require that there should be this kind of proportion? By no means. In fact, is there any code of criminal jurisprudence which, in determining the infliction of punishment for a given crime, will take as a measure or rule the length of time employed in committing it? In an instant of time a murderer may, in cold blood, shoot down his victim. And do not the civil tribunals punish homicide by imprisonment for life, or, as it is most frequently the case, by capital punishment, which is, we may say, equivalent to an eternal punishment? Neither do men consider such procedure unjust; for the law does not determine the amount of punishment by the time occupied in committing the offense, but by the nature of the offense itself, whose gravity is measured from the motive of the criminal, from his purpose, his premeditation, and other circumstances connected with it.

[1] De Spirit. et Litter., c. xxxiii, n 58.

[2] Ps. cxviii. 137. See also Wisdom, v. 1–14.

Now, if our adversary can find no injustice in such judgments of men, how can he accuse of injustice the judgments of God?

We find no difficulty in admitting that a penalty, to be just, must be proportionate to the gravity of the offense; and as, by the commission of mortal sin, man becomes guilty of an outrage against God's infinite majesty, the greatest insult we can imagine, so it is just that so grievous an offense should call for a proportionate punishment, such as that which God, the Supreme Lawgiver and Judge, has threatened; a punishment finite in intensity, but infinite in duration.

The Angelic Doctor treating of this very question writes: "In no court of justice is it required that the punishment should be adapted to the fault in point of duration. For though murder or any other crime may be committed in a moment, it is not, on that account, punished with the penalty of a moment, but sometimes with perpetual imprisonment, or exile, sometimes also with death; in which latter case we must consider not the time taken in executing the offender, but its consequences, that is, the fact that he is cut off for all time from the fellowship of the living, thus in some manner representing the eternity of punishment inflicted by God." [3]

The duration of the punishment is justly made to correspond not to the duration of the criminal act, but to the permanence of the stain or guilt of said act; and so long as such guilt or stain lasts, as in the case of sinners dying impenitent, its punishment also will last, that is, for ever. So much we learn from Christ's own words: "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, . . . shall be guilty of an everlasting sin." [4]

DIFFICULTY III

585. PARISHIONER.—On one occasion, a lady, known in town as a zealous member of the Unitarian Church, said with some kind of asperity: "How is it possible for any rational mind to believe that Almighty God, who is infinitely good and merciful, should punish sinners, poor mortals, with endless penalties?"

586. CURATE.—God, it is true, is infinitely good and merciful, but He is also infinitely just; and it is precisely on account of His attribute of infinite goodness and justice that He is bound to impose efficacious restraints on sinners, and thus prevent them from defying Him with impunity. If iniquity is so rampant in our days, notwithstanding the conviction in most men of their responsibility to a Supreme Judge, and of the existence of future eternal retribution, what would become of mankind if that salutary restraint did not exist, and men had consequently nothing to fear from a judgment to come? God is good, nay, infinitely good, and it is exactly owing to His goodness that He

[3] St. Thomas 1a 2ae, q. lxxxvii, art. 3, 4. [4] Mark iii. 29.

will neither allow iniquity to triumph for ever with impunity, nor permit that His faithful, loyal subjects, the just, should be abandoned into the hands of the wicked, to be oppressed and trampled upon by them without restraint. God is indeed good and merciful; but does reason tell us that the exercise of His goodness should be such as to encourage man's rebellion, and shield the sinner's wickedness and perversity? God's goodness does not, however, exclude His love of order and justice, and His infinite hatred of that which is contrary to His sanctity; hence His abhorrence of whatever violates His sacred rights—His indubitable and inalienable rights to the creature's submission, loyalty, and obedience. If, therefore, sinners despise His laws and resist the invitations of His mercy, they must, in the end, fall under the rigor of His justice. Hence the terrible sanction of eternal punishment has been wisely decreed by the Supreme Judge to check the criminal career of the wicked and to protect the just against their iniquitous persecutions.

Moreover, though the attribute of God's goodness is infinite, yet its external manifestation or exercise on behalf of sinners cannot be infinite, for it can never be exhausted; hence its outward effects, always regulated by divine wisdom, are essentially finite, as the creatures on whom they are bestowed are also finite. Therefore, no injustice is done to rebellious, impenitent sinners if, by their obstinacy, they render themselves unworthy of God's mercy—nay, actually reject it. The present life is the period of time given to man for his trial. He is left free to choose for himself either good or evil; but the choice once made and not retracted, even on the threshold of eternity, remains irrevocable. For the future world is not a place of probation, but of stability; it is not the way, but the goal; and the lot, whether good or evil, which he has chosen, shall be his forever. The following testimonies from Holy Writ prove the truth of our assertions: "The Lord hath set water and fire before thee; stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt. Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him."[5] "If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there it shall be."[6] After the trial of the present life man can no longer change his lot. Either forever a king upon a throne, or forever a slave in a dungeon: either forever in joy or forever in sorrow; either forever happy or forever miserable. In the present life God displays, in a most striking degree, the attribute of His mercy; but if the sinner persists to the end in enmity with his Maker, and falls into the hands of God's justice, he can only blame himself for his irreparable damnation. As the Apostle St. Paul warns us, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."[7]

Therefore God rejects in the world to come the impenitent sin-

[5] Ecclus. xv. 17, 18. [6] Eccles. xi. 3. [7] Heb. x. 31.

ners only because they rejected and condemned themselves in the present. Of their own accord, and notwithstanding the terrific warnings of conscience, of reason, and of divine revelation, they preferred sin and enmity of God to God's grace and friendship; they preferred the eternal pains of hell to the everlasting joys of heaven; the sojourn of Satan to the mansions of God and of His saints. "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me." [8]

DIFFICULTY IV

587. PARISHIONER.—One evening the discussion was not only lively, but even boisterous, particularly when a gray-haired university professor rose from his seat and, assuming an authoritative tone, said aloud: "The more I study this question the more convinced I become that everlasting punishment is absolutely incompatible with what we know of the goodness of God. He is by nature a Father too tender-hearted to condemn any of His children to an eternal hell." Some of his sympathizers ventured to applaud.

588. CURATE.—It must be admitted that, in our days, the denial of everlasting punishment of the wicked is not, by any means, confined to a few theorists, who have little or no influence outside their own circle. On the contrary, prominent churchmen and laymen of every sectarian creed are taking the new doctrine avowedly under their wing, and employing all the resources of their learning and eloquence in supporting and spreading it far and wide. Among their most devoted disciples are reckoned frivolous worldlings not at all unwilling to think that, according to their masters, the sanctions of religious belief are not, after all, so very stringent in our age, as they used to be represented by deluded rigorist preachers of times gone by. According to all these advocates of the milder gospel, God is a Father, but not a Judge, Christ is a lamb, but not the roaring lion of Juda; the Holy Ghost is a dove, but not a consuming fire. Sin is but a human weakness, we all share it in a greater or less degree. God is surely not less compassionate than man is, and so forth.

What shall we say to all this? We reply that the wounds of the soul are too deep to be reached by a gospel of mere maudlin sentiment. Rose-water is very refreshing as an external application in health; but he is a sorry physician surely who should seek to cure gangrene or cancer with it. The so-called modern milder view of God's judgments is but a sentimental, effeminate religion, a religion of warm flesh and blood, which lacks the solid frame-work of definite, uncompromising doctrine; a religion, in other words, made up of cordial potions and mollifying ointments from which the bitterness of strong, wholesome, active medicine is carefully excluded. To speak very plainly, God save us from a gospel which conceals the all but desperate evil of man's heart

[8] Osee, xiii. 9.

and his imminent danger of everlasting damnation and speaks to him only the smoother parts of truth. A gospel which muffles up hell from human view and too often makes insinuations against its eternal duration, or its very existence, is certainly not the Lord's Gospel; and we, if we care for our salvation, must want none other than His. But, at the same time, God forbid that we should represent the Divine Saviour's Gospel otherwise than as full of brightest hope and encouragement to all who will part company with sin. The province of human effort lies in the strong, earnest resolve to be holy and loyal to the Lord. Whoever has such a will, though firmly believing in the reality of eternal pains, shall do works of righteousness more from motives of gratitude and love than from the constraining fear of the endless punishment awaiting the impenitent beyond the grave.

589. "If sin is so fatal, and hell is and must be so rigorous, awful, yet in repentance, too, is man purified. Repentance is the grand Christian act . . . the whole mountain shakes with joy, and a psalm of praise rises, when one soul has perfected repentance, and got the sin and misery left behind."[9]

590. God's justice inflicting eternal punishment on the reprobates is not at all opposed to His goodness, for those two attributes do not refer to the same subject. In fact, mercy or goodness is intended to grant pardon to repenting sinners, whilst justice is directed to chastise the impenitent. Hence these two attributes are never found conflicting with each other. The effects or results of these two attributes are different, it is true, but there is no contradiction or opposition between them when exercised toward God's rational creatures. On the contrary, they are in perfect harmony, so much so that God would not be good if He were not also just. Goodness and justice spring from the same divine perfection, God's essence, with which they are identified; but their outward operations—*operationes ad extra*—as theologians teach us, differ according to the dispositions or conditions of the subjects on which they are exercised. Hence, as God would act against His justice if He should leave unpunished the obstinate transgressors of His laws, so He would act in opposition to His mercy and His promises if He were to refuse pardon to repentant sinners during the present time, the period assigned by Divine Providence to their trial or probation.

DIFFICULTY V

591. Parishioner.—The same evening a newspaper editor endeavored to sustain the view of the old university sage and added: "To admit that a God of infinite love inflicts on His creatures a punishment that shall never end is to admit in Him an evident contradiction, for infinite love and eternal penalties

[9] Carlyle on Dante's Purgatorio.

are contradictory terms that cannot be reconciled.'' The professor nodded to him in sign of approval.

592. CURATE.—The strength of this difficulty rests on a theological misconception, nay, a downright heretical supposition. God's love is indeed infinite in itself, as all His other attributes, as goodness, mercy, wisdom, justice, omnipotence, etc. But His love, as well as His other attributes and perfections, cannot be said to be infinite in their outward manifestations in relation to His creatures. The first obvious reason of this statement is based on the fact that, if God's external manifestation of His attributes were also infinite, then every act of His omnipotence would produce an infinite effect, and we should consequently have an infinite world, a metaphysical absurdity, for no contingent being can be infinite.

593. Mr. J. A. Froude, a blasphemous opponent of the very existence of hell, whilst vainly trying to refute Leibnitz's argument in favor of the justice of eternal punishment, utters a metaphysical blunder by saying that ''hell's punishment becomes infinite because inflicted by an infinite Being.'' According to the philosophy of this Oxford professor, everything that God has made is infinite, because the work of an infinite Creator.[10]

Hence, though God's love is infinite in itself, yet it cannot be infinite *ad extra*, that is, in its external manifestations, on behalf of His intelligent creatures, whether angels or men. Those who argue that a God of infinite love cannot be the author of an eternal hell, must prove that because God's love is infinite in itself, He is therefore bound to exert that infinite love to its full extent on behalf of His creatures, and therefore abolish hell. This reasoning is evidently false and illogical, because it supposes that the attribute of God's goodness or love, because infinite in itself, must also be infinite in all its outward manifestations; a conclusion evidently wrong, because founded on the erroneous principle pointed out above. Hence he who talks of God's infinite love toward men, if he means that He must love them infinitely, talks nonsense. When we say that the Lord is a God of infinite love, we mean indeed that He loves Himself and His infinite attributes and perfections with an infinite love; and that, as to His creatures, He loves them in proportion to their likeness to Himself. Hence, when such likeness ceases to exist, because destroyed by mortal sin, then God's love is changed into a reverse attitude, and literally transformed into hatred.

594. That our acceptance before God, and consequent eternal salvation depends on our resemblance to His Incarnate Son by grace is clearly stated by St. Paul in the following sentence of his epistle to the Romans: ''To be made conformable to the image of His Son.''[11] As to God's attitude toward sinners,

[10] Froude, The Nemesis of Faith, 2nd Ed., pp. 17, 18. [11] Rom. viii. 29.

who not only marred and disfigured this image in their soul, but entirely effaced it and "received [instead] the character of the beast,"[12] we see it clearly expressed in the following passages of Holy Scripture, and many others, that could, if needed, be easily alleged: "And the Lord shall say to you: I know you not, whence you are; Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity."[13] "Thou, O Lord, hatest all the workers of iniquity."[14] "To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike."[15] Hence God tolerates sinners, offers to them His grace, and waits for their conversion; but He cannot be said to extend to them the love of friendship and affection which He cherishes for those of His creatures who love, obey, and fear Him.

Almighty God can indeed propose as His positive and antecedent end the manifestation of His goodness and mercy; but He may not propose to Himself as His positive and antecedent end the manifestation and exercise of this vindicative justice, according to the cruel Calvinistic creed still adopted by some Presbyterian factions. He can antecedently wish to reward; but His deliberation to punish can only be consequent; that is, owing to his foreknowledge of the wilful and obstinate rebellion of His creatures. Such is the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas.[16] Those who remove themselves by sin from the merciful and bountiful design of the divine will fall back into the opposite design of the same divine will by rendering themselves amenable to the well-merited punishment of God's justice. We may escape the dominion of men, but we cannot escape the dominion of God. "It is impossible, O Lord, to escape Thy hand."[17] And saith the Lord: "I will strike and I will heal, and there is none that can deliver out of My hand."[18] Willing or unwilling, we must submit to it. We must either live under the empire of His love or under that of His justice; either glorify His goodness by free obedience or glorify His power and justice by inevitable punishment. In other words, we may choose to spend our eternity with God and His angels in heaven, or to spend it with Satan and the reprobates in hell. (See n. **559.**)

DIFFICULTY VI

595. Parishioner.—A Unitarian minister, an enthusiastic admirer of the late Henry Ward Beecher, quoted from one of his sermons the following sentence, which had caused a great sensation in New York and elsewhere: "I will never let go of the truth that the nature of God is to suffer for others, rather than to make them suffer."[19]

596. Curate.—According to this view men may go on sinning with impunity, for the Divine Redeemer has already taken all

[12] Apoc. xix. 20. [13] Luke xiii. 27. [14] Ps. v. 7. [15] Wis. xiv. 9.
[16] Summa, P. I. 1ª, q. xix, art. 6, 8. [17] Wis. xvi. 15.
[18] Deut. xxxii. 39. [19] Defense, p. 1.

the punishment in their stead. Is not this a most outrageous, antichristian view of the purpose of Redemption? Let us rather listen to the Divine Saviour Himself, who, on the very day of His passion, on the way to Calvary, uttered this warning to all sinners: "If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" [20] By which words Christ meant to say: "If such severe sufferings are, by divine permission, inflicted on me, who like a fertile tree am loaded with fruits of holiness and good works, what punishment must they expect, who like a dead barren tree bear no fruit of salvation, but only works of iniquity?" "If," writes St. Peter, "the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" [21]

597. Father Nampon, S. J., in his work on the Decrees of the Council of Trent, alluding to the horrible doctrine of Luther—"*Crede firmiter et pecca fortiter.*"—"Believe firmly and sin boldly"—quotes the following extract from a letter, which that apostate, lustful monk wrote to his friend Melancthon in 1521:

"If you preach grace, preach the reality and not the appearance of it. If grace is a reality, bring it a true substantial sin [to cure] and not a mere semblance of sin. God does not save those who have only a semblance of sin. Sin, then, and sin stoutly, but still more stoutly trust and rejoice in Jesus Christ, who is the conqueror of sin and death and of the world. We must sin so long as we are here below. This is not the habitation of justice. Sin will not separate us from the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world. Though we committed a thousand murders and a thousand fornications in a single day, can you believe that a Lamb so precious has not superabundantly paid the ransom of all our crimes?"

DIFFICULTY VII

598. Parishioner.—A young man, a university graduate, who had been recently appointed Judge of the Superior Court, took part in the discussion and said: "I am fully aware of the fact that the question of future, endless retribution touches on both philosophical and theological points in which, I candidly admit, I am far from being an adept. I shall, however, approach that question from a judicial point of view, a department of knowledge which I had to master as a condition for my present official position. I must take a decisive stand against any Church whose ministers hold and preach the so-called dogma of eternal punishment. Such a doctrine is directly opposed to the intent and purpose of all punitive legislation, which is the correction and reform of criminals. If such is the procedure of human jurisprudence, which we know to be in itself imperfect, the same

[20] Luke xxiii. 31.

[21] 1 Peter iv. 18. See also Cursus Scripturae Migne, vol. xxii, p. 1377.

purpose of punishment must, with stronger reason *(a fortiori)*, be found in the divine legislation, which is essentially perfect." He then resumed his seat amidst the applause of the audience, among whom some were heard to exclaim: "A Daniel come to Judgment! O wise young Judge! O noble Judge!"

599. CURATE.—The whole structure of this objection rests on a false foundation, on a wrong principle, as it takes it for granted that the main purpose of punitive laws, whether human or divine, are directed to reform the criminals, and to deter others from evil-doing, which we emphatically deny. The wrong foundation being then removed, the whole superstructure totters and crumbles to the ground. That this twofold object may be aimed at and occasionally obtained, in purely human penalties, barring capital punishment, we freely admit; though we hold that even then the guilty are chastised principally as a reparation of the moral order violated by the criminals in transgressing the civil laws. But with regard to endless punishment inflicted by the Supreme Judge, its main purpose is the vindication of the moral order violated by sin, and the reparation of the outrage done to the divine majesty by the sinner, who, after grievously offending his Sovereign Creator and greatest Benefactor, obstinately perseveres in his rebellion, and, by refusing to repent in his lifetime, chooses to remain in perpetual enmity against God. Jesus Christ spoke of this awful crime, by which the sinner signs and seals his own eternal damnation, when He said: "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin."[22] Hence the execution of justice is the first and primary consideration and constitutes the very essence and chief purpose of punishment. On this account the sinner's penalties are intended as a reparation of the divine offense and an expiation, though fruitless as to the effacing of the guilt of his sins committed through the abuse of his liberty. As St. Augustine remarks, "Almighty God has a twofold purpose in His legislation; one aims at the display of His goodness, the other exhibits the exercise of His justice. The rational creature that, by the abuse of its free will, subtracts itself from the order of God's bounty, chooses of its own accord to fall into the order of His justice and incurs all the consequences it entails."[23] (See n. **71.**)

600. Here we must notice the fact that those who advance the objection we are refuting base their reasoning on another principle that is radically wrong, for they maintain that the principal end of creation is not the glory of God, but the happiness of His rational creatures, angels and men. This principle, as we have shown in Part I, is directly opposed to divine revelation, which teaches us that "The Lord made all things for Himself; the wicked also for the evil day."[24] Then, in determining the

[22] Mark iii. 29. [23] De Civit. Dei. [24] Prov. xvi. 4.

end of creation we must carefully distinguish the extrinsic glory of God from the happiness of man. The former constitutes the principal end, the latter the secondary end of creation. God consequently orders all things for the attainment of His chief end, His glory, by the manifestation of His attributes and perfections. The just, acting in conformity with this divine purpose and fulfilling God's holy will, secure to themselves heavenly happiness, their secondary end, and proclaim God's mercy and goodness for all eternity. The wicked, on the contrary, by their resistance to the divine will, expressed in both the natural and the positive law, failing to fulfil the primary object of their creation, the service of God, consequently forfeit their secondary end, human happiness, and proclaim against their will God's power and justice in the punishment that shall have no end. The two ends, the glory of God and the happiness of man, are so intimately connected that if man seeks the former, he will infallibly secure the attainment of the latter. On the contrary, his neglect of the former will necessarily entail the loss of the latter.

Let us suppose for argument's sake that God's punishments are medicinal, and intended for the correction and reform of the wicked. May we not suppose that some of them will obstinately refuse to repent and prefer to persevere in their rebellion, hating their Maker with an implacable hate? In this supposition, which the abuse of human liberty and the abyss of human malice render quite possible, what will Almighty God do? Will He be compelled to grant to an incorrigible, rebellious sinner the happiness of heaven? And if He did, would not this result be the triumph of iniquity over divine omnipotence? Therefore, the only conclusion we can legitimately draw is the admission of the justice of everlasting punishment: a provision which, whilst safeguarding the rights of God's offended majesty, shows the inevitable consequences of all resistance and opposition to His holy will.

601. We offer some additional reflections, which will contribute to the refutation of the theory that all punishment ought to be medicinal, that is, intended for the correction and reform of the guilty. Under the best human government the general welfare of the State and its members, the protection and vindication of the sacredness of its laws, which cannot be violated with impunity, constitute the primary end contemplated in the infliction of penalties on the transgressors. We intuitively connect punishment with crime, without the slightest reference to the reform of the criminal. If to-morrow our jails should discharge their inmates, would it be found that penal endurance had qualified them for honest callings and association with law-abiding citizens? How many desperate characters are harboring thoughts of revenge against the judge that condemned them, the witnesses that testified against them, and the civil authority that carried the sentence into execution?

602. To suppose that hereafter the pardoned sinner will repent is to assume without warrant that the punishment always causes repentance. But even in this world obstinate criminals become worse when they do not accept their punishment as the just due of their misdeeds. A prisoner, writes Fr. Conway, who was nearing the end of a twenty years' sentence once told me, when I asked him if he was sorry for the crime he had committed, "No, and I will be revenged on society, when I am free." On what principle then can any one claim that punishment hereafter will inevitably work the conversion of the obdurate sinner? [25]

To pass from the present to the next world, it is said that, when some one expressed to Satan his surprise that he did not repent of his rebellion, he replied with great anger: "Do you think that if I had meant to repent, I should not have repented long ago?" The individual that expressed his surprise at the non-repentance of Satan evidently ignored the fact that the demons as well as the reprobates are immutably fixed in their malice, hence utterly incapable of salutary repentance.[26] The fact was related by the individual, upon whom Satan had tried to impose. But I cannot recall the authority upon which this legend is founded.[27]

603. As the advocates of the medicinal and corrective purpose of God's future punishments are wont to justify their views by Scriptural texts, let us see whether the testimonies of Holy Writ announcing the condemnation of the wicked to hell's fire hint at any reformatory and disciplinary purpose of that punishment. Out of many sacred texts that might be adduced, the three following will amply suffice: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire." [28] "If thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off, it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." [29] "In a flame of fire, giving vengeance to them, who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall suffer eternal punishment." [30]

Can any one detect in these texts even the remotest indication of corrective discipline on behalf of the condemned reprobates? Where, then, is the Scriptural warrant for the existence of any disciplinary trial and ulterior reform in the world to come? And as there can be no contradiction in God's written word, our opponents will look in vain for any Scriptural testimonies favorable to their theory, and therefore opposed to those we have alleged.

The idea of future punishment being corrective instead of vindicative and expiatory, changes the whole plan of salvation

[25] Rev. B. L. Conway, C.S.P., in his "Question Box."
[26] See St. Thomas, De Angelis, p. i, q. lxiv, art. 2, 3.
[27] See Pusey, What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment, p. 280.
[28] Matt. xxv. 41. [29] Mark ix. 42. [30] 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

obtainable from the grace and merits of Christ within the limits of earthly probation, and revolutionizes all our notions of divine revelation. What becomes, then, of Our Saviour's testimony when He thus spoke to the obstinate Jews: "You shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sin."? [31]

Could our Blessed Redeemer, consistently with His goodness and veracity, utter such a dreadful threat if, in the future world, sinners could yet resort to Him for pardon and mercy? Yet as God's word testifies, only from Him salvation comes. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me." [32]

Likewise addressing the Jews, St. Peter thus spoke of the power of the name of Jesus, in whom alone salvation can be found: "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." [33]

CHAPTER IV

DIFFICULTIES VIII AND IX

THE ANNIHILATION THEORY EXPOSED AND REFUTED

DIFFICULTY VIII

604. PARISHIONER.—One day the guests engaged in the usual disputation were somewhat surprised at the novel view presented by one of the speakers. "A solution," he said, "has been found at last of the difficulty how to reconcile God's attributes of goodness, clemency, and mercy with the everlasting punishment of the wicked. The solution, prompted by common sense, is this: The Lord God will grant everlasting happiness to the just. As to the wicked persevering in sin even to their death, they will be annihilated by divine omnipotence and thus eternally punished, inasmuch as they will be eternally deprived of the gift of existence; and thus an end will be put to sin."

605. CURATE.—Though this so-called solution may appear novel to some people, yet it must be said that it is nearly a century old. As its advocates have attempted to support it by Biblical texts, it will be necessary to show that none of the Scriptural testimonies they adduce favors their view; and that, on the contrary, they plainly demonstrate the natural immortality of all souls, whether saved or lost; a conclusion that entirely demolishes their fabric, and leaves intact the dogma of eternal punishment of the wicked which they had undertaken to disprove. Great

[31] John viii. 21. [32] John xiv. 6.
[33] Acts iv. 12. (See St. Thomas, 1a 2ae, q. lxxxvii, art. 3.)

stress is laid by the defenders of annihilation on the word "destruction" and its equivalents, which occur in several passages of Holy Scripture. Thus a Mr. Davis in his book entitled "Endless Sufferings Not the Doctrine of the Bible," writes on page 6: "What is meant by the term 'destruction' in St. Matthew's Gospel ch. x. 28—'Fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell'? It means the making an end of the whole man, of both his body and his soul by annihilation."

As we remarked above (n. **563**), the true meaning of that expression, "can destroy," is fully explained by a parallel passage in St. Luke's Gospel, which reads thus: "And I say to you, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that they have no more that they can do; but I will show you whom you shall fear, fear ye Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him."[1]

Here we have a clear case of an interpretation by an advocate of annihilation, which, if adopted, would involve an open contradiction between the words of St. Matthew and those of St. Luke, though both are registering in their Gospel the teaching of Christ.

Now, as God's word can never contradict itself, the only alternative left to us is to abandon the interpretation given by the Annihilationists to the term "destroy" and adopt the common interpretation of both Catholic and Protestant scholars, who, explaining St. Matthew's passage by the clearer words of St. Luke, exclude altogether the final extinction of the souls of the wicked and assert their everlasting damnation. Christ in that text compares the power of man with that of God. Men can kill the body, but they are utterly powerless when confronted with the indestructible life of the soul. God, on the other hand, being the Master of life and death, can doubtless kill the body, and, as shown previously, possesses also the absolute power of reducing to nothing the human soul; a power, however, which, owing to His attributes of wisdom, goodness, and justice, and the truthfulness of His promises and threats, He will never exercise. God, moreover, as Supreme Judge, the Evangelists assure us, possesses and will exert the tremendous power of condemning both the soul and the body of the wicked to the torments of hell.

But here we must not overlook the fact that the last two words of St. Matthew's text, "in hell," quoted by Mr. Davis, contain a complete refutation of his annihilation theory. For the Evangelist tells us by those words what the term "to destroy" means. It means the eternal punishment of both the soul and the body in hell; of the former immediately after death in sin; of the latter after the final resurrection unto judgment, that is, unto damnation, reserved to the wicked. "They that

[1] Luke xii. 4, 5.

have done evil shall come forth unto the resurrection of judgment''—words of Christ registered in St. John's Gospel (v. 29.)

Moreover, annihilation, instead of being an eternal punishment, as its patrons contend, must more appropriately be regarded as an eternal *exemption* from punishment. In his attempt to meet this difficulty a Mr. Constable says: ''Eternal death inflicted on sinners is eternally felt.''[2] Eternal death, then, inflicted on impenitent sinners, is eternally felt—a non-existing sinner eternally feeling his non-existence. Can there be a more glaring absurdity? Surely the cause is desperate which compels its advocates to resort to such silly means of defense. We may here rightly apply the Latin saying: ''*Causa non bona patrocinio peior erit.*''—''A bad cause is made worse by defending it.''

The question is sometimes asked: Why does not Almighty God, when confronted with incorrigible, obstinate, impenitent sinners, exercise His omnipotent power and put an end to the existence of such reckless creatures?

We reply: We all know that God possesses such power; but what our opponents are expected to do is to prove that He is bound to exercise it, a task which they are utterly unable to accomplish, because both reason and revelation are against it, as we will now show at greater length.

Our task will be to prove that the theory of annihilation cannot be defended either on Scriptural or on rational grounds.

606. Among the many erroneous conceptions of the nature and attributes of the human soul prevailing among men are to be reckoned those that are entertained by the advocates of annihilation, and they are the following:

Confounding the immortality of the body, the extraordinary gift conferred by God on our first parents and forfeited by sin, with the immortality of the soul, which God made naturally immortal, they hold that man's soul was not created immortal, and that its immortality was the gift of Christ. They moreover teach that the death threatened by the Lord against our parents[3] would have been annihilation, had it not been for the Redeemer, who was to intervene and secure a reprieve through His grace. They further maintain that Christ bestows immortality on believers and withholds it from all who reject His Gospel. And this explains, they say, why they that do not believe perish utterly, either at death, or, after having suffered the punishment awarded to them, at the last judgment, when future punishment will cease, as no being will remain to endure it.

All these assumptions are so obviously false and utterly opposed to the elementary truths of divine revelation and Christian doctrine, that to state them is to refute them.

However, as their upholders attempt to show that their theory

[2] Duration of Future Punishment, 3d edition, p. 11. [3] Gen. ii. 17.

is founded on the words of Holy Writ, we shall prove that none of the Scriptural testimonies they adduce favor their view, but that, on the contrary, they plainly demonstrate the natural immortality of the soul.

607. They do not insist on specifying the exact period of time when the soul's existence shall cease, because, as we shall show later on, the so-called Destructionists are very much at variance among themselves as to the precise time of the soul's destruction. In fact,

(a) Some hold that it takes place at death,

(b) Others contend that it occurs at the last judgment,

(c) Still others believe that total annihilation will happen only after prolonged sufferings, according to God's sentence.

For the sake of clearness we divide this discussion into two distinct parts. In the first place, we will analyze those texts of Scripture which, referring to "death," "life," destruction," "perishing," or similar terms, are brought forward by our opponents as demonstrating the complete cessation of existence. Our task will be to show that the alleged texts lend no countenance whatever to their view and that they cannot consequently support it by the authority of God's word. Secondly, we shall refer the reader to Part III, where we adduce from both the Old and the New Testament numerous testimonies of Holy Writ proclaiming the great truth of the immortality of the human soul. We shall thus be able to present to our readers a complete refutation of the annihilation or destruction scheme; a refutation derived from the same Divine Book, Holy Writ, which the upholders of annihilation are wont to invoke as the principal supporter of their opinion.

We freely admit that the literal sense is the common, ordinary, obvious sense or significance in all languages; therefore, the terms "death," "life," "destruction," "perishing," etc., are to be taken in their literal, obvious meaning, unless the context and other passages referring to the same subject, and the general tenor of the Book in which they appear demand quite a different understanding. This principle is freely admitted by Mr. Edward White himself, the staunch advocate of the so-called Voluntary Annihilation theory. In fact, he thus writes in his work entitled, "Life in Christ Only," page 9:

"The literal sense of words is *prima facie* their true sense: it has the first claim to be received, unless overruled by the connection, or by the general tenor of the book in which they appear."

This is quite true, and it is for this very reason that the terms "death," "destruction," "perishing," cannot convey the meaning attributed to them by our opponents, because the connection and the general tenor of the book containing them exclude the literal meaning and demand a deeper and far more significant

import. Words possess no inherent and immutable meaning, by which their import should invariably be determined independently of the context and the mind of the writer. Words are but signs of thoughts and ideas, and must be read in the light of their contexts. The reader's task does not consist in applying to words and sentences his own individual meaning, but in grasping the thoughts, ideas, and meaning of the writer. The following rules or precautions must then be borne in mind:

608. 1. Since words may have more than one meaning, to get at the meaning of the writer it is necessary to know the various meanings of the words he uses; and next, it is necessary to determine from the context, and the scope of the book, which precise meaning the writer attaches to the words in any given sentence.

2. In Sacred Scripture there can be no real contradiction of one passage to another, for the simple reason that God, its Author, cannot contradict Himself. Hence any interpretation in which Sacred Scripture is made to contradict itself cannot be admitted as true.

3. We must take note of the argument, or subject-matter of the book, and of the purpose the sacred writer has in view. Thus, though the term "law" has several meanings, from the argument of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, we understand at once that he there speaks of the Mosaic Law.

609. What, then, is the meaning of the term "death," when used in Scripture to designate the final doom of the wicked? Destructionists reply—"cessation of life," "extinction of being." We, on the contrary, hold that it denotes something totally different. In the Apocalypse we read: "And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death."[4]

Here is the interpretation of the advocates of annihilation: "The first death was the separation of the soul from the body, which all designate by the term 'death.' The second death of the wicked pointed out by the above text is their total extinction."

610. This interpretation cannot be accepted for the following reasons: As to the first death, we reject their explanation, for the expression "this is the second death" has reference to a first death, which was the cause of the second. Now, the mere fact of natural death, that is, the separation of the soul from the body, common to all men, to the just as well as to the wicked, can have no bearing on the second death, which, as we shall soon prove, means eternal damnation in hell's fire.

What, then, is the final death, that which causes damnation; namely, the second death? It is the loss of sanctifying grace, the spiritual life of the soul, as the following Scriptural testimonies clearly show: "Sin, when it is completed, begetteth death."[5]

[4] Apoc. xx. 14. [5] James i. 15.

"There is a sin unto death."[6] "He that loveth not abideth in death."[7] "If you live according to the flesh you shall die."[8] "All that hate me, love death."[9] "There is a way which seemeth just to a man; but the ends thereof lead to death."[10] As to the true import of the expression "second death" which Destructionists interpret as synonymous with "extinction," it is given in the very next verse of the same chapter. "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the pool of fire."[11] It is plain, then, that the second death, far from being the extinction or annihilation of the wicked, is nothing less than their final condemnation to the pool of fire, the dungeon of hell. This is the interpretation given by all Catholic theologians and Biblical scholars under the guidance of their leader, St. Thomas, who in his explanation of Apocalypse xx. 14 speaks thus: "The first death is that of sin, and this is in the soul. The second death is that of hell's fire, and it is both in the soul and in the body. In the former immediately after death in impenitence: in the latter after the final resurrection."

If the living advocates of the ultimate destruction, or total extinction, are very anxious for the truth of their theory, much more so are the unhappy multitudes of the lost, of whom we read in the Apocalypse, "In those days, men shall seek death and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them."[12]

An additional proof of the meaning which most interpreters attach to the term "second death" is furnished by the same inspired Book in the testimonies referring to the lot of the just as contrasted with that of the wicked. "He that shall overcome, shall not be hurt by the second death,"[13] that is, he that by conquering his passions shall avoid sin, the first death (i.e., that of the spiritual life of the soul) shall not suffer the second death; namely, eternal damnation. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. In these the second death hath no power."[14] By the "first resurrection" is here meant the transition of the soul of the just from earth to heaven, when separated from the body by death. It is intended to distinguish the happiness of the soul enjoyed by the blessed immediately after death, if found fully purified, from that of their bodies at their glorious resurrection on the judgment day.

611. The somewhat strange language of the inspired writer in Apocalypse, xx. 14, "and hell and death were cast into the pool of fire," is fully explained if taken in connection with the preceding verse, where it is stated that all will obey their summons to the judgment. Then the dead whose souls had been condemned, will issue from hell to unite with their risen bodies,

[6] 1 John v. 16. [7] Id. iii. 14. [8] Rom. viii. 13. [9] Prov. viii. 36.
[10] Id. xiv. 12. [11] Apoc. xx. 15. [12] Apoc. ix. 6. [13] Id. ii. 11.
[14] Id. xx. 6.

to hear from the Supreme Judge their final sentence: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire. . . . And these shall go into everlasting punishment." [15]

"And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged, every one according to their works." [16] Here the past is prophetically used instead of the future.

612. We deem it advisable to add to what we stated above the following considerations, which will once and forever, we hope, dispose of what the advocates of the annihilation scheme call their clinching argument; it is the text of Apocalypse xx. 14: "This is the second death."

To the preceding testimonies from the Apocalypse and others derived from the same inspired Book we subjoin the explanation of the meaning of "the second death" given by several holy Fathers and other sacred writers:

"Let him fear to die, who is to pass into the second death, an eternal flame." [17]

"We term that punishment the second death, which is perpetual: it is the condemnation of souls to eternal punishment for their deserts." [18]

"We should fear the second death, which is full of weeping and gnashing of teeth, of groan and anguish." [19]

"That which is called the second death is nothing else than a life of punishment: the lower hell where Gehenna will torture soul and body." [20]

"One death is the separation of the soul from God, which is caused by sin. Another death is named the lake of hell, in which sinful souls are kept." [21]

"There is for the soul everlasting death, when it is deprived of the true life for having lost God, and cannot be free from bodily sufferings by death." [22]

Different Scriptural meaning of the term "life."—The Destructionists, acting on their principle of literal interpretation, regardless of the exegetical rules to be kept in view, hold that Christ imparts to believers in His Gospel the extraordinary gift of immortality, an endless existence, but denies it to the wicked and unbelievers, who, consequently, at the termination of their earthly sojourn, cease to exist. To confirm their doctrine they allege the following words of Christ: "I am come that they might have life." [23] First of all, it is highly interesting for us to know when that remarkable gift was bestowed on the happy

[15] Matt. xxv. 41, 46. [16] Apoc. xx. 13.
[17] St. Cyprian, De Mortal., n. 10. [18] Lactantius, Inst. Div. l. ii, c. xii
[19] St. James of Nisibis, Serm. viii, De Resur, Mort.
[20] St. Paulinus, Epist. xl. ad Sanct.
[21] Apoc. xx. 14, 15. Sedulius, In ep. ad Rom, c. vi.
[22] St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei. l. xxi. 3; Enchiridion Patr. p. 653.
[23] John x. 10.

believers. Mr. Minton, himself an ardent upholder of destructionism, proposes and answers our question:

"When does the stupendous change from perishable to imperishable, from mortal to immortal, destructible to indestructible, take place? The Scripture replies: It begins in regeneration and is completed in resurrection. When the human soul, being quickened by the Divine Spirit, is brought to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent, it passes from death to life."[24]

It is easy to show that such a theory bristles with absurdities. According to it Christ, instead of being the Redeemer, bestowing salvation, is acting as the Creator, communicating endless existence. The text alleged for proof, according to all interpreters, whether Catholic or non-Catholic—the Destructionists, of course, excluded—has no reference whatever to the bestowal of rational endless life, but simply states the fact that Christ came upon earth to deliver men from sin by conferring upon them, chiefly through Baptism, divine grace, which is as truly the spiritual life of the soul as the soul itself is the life of the body. But even supposing a literal meaning of the word "life" in the text in question, what right have our opponents to assume that such a term means endless, immortal life? Mr. Minton says that the Scripture replies, but fails to give us the chapter and verse of the Bible in which the reply is contained. But other even more glaring absurdities follow from the assumption that Christ grants immortality to believers, and withholds it from those who reject the Gospel.

Here we ask: What becomes of that gift when the believers prevaricate, commit grievous offenses, and even renounce the Gospel altogether? Will they forfeit the gift of immortality whenever they sin? And will they recover it again when they repent, and are converted to Christ?

If they answer affirmatively, what Biblical testimonies, we ask, can they allege to justify their view? The soul, its origin by God's creative act, its faculties and its immortality are indeed gifts of the Sovereign Creator, but they are natural gifts, common to all human beings, to the heathens as well as to the Christians, to the wicked as well as to the just. This is so true that the truth of the human soul's immortality, though distinctly taught in Holy Scripture, is established independently of it by reason alone, and was demonstrated by Gentile philosophers that lived centuries before the coming of Christ.

613. There are many Scriptural texts both in the Old and in the New Testament in which the word "life" has a meaning perfectly identical with that attributed by all Biblical scholars to the sentence registered in St. John's Gospel: "I am come that they may have life."[25] "Except you eat the flesh of

[24] The Glory of Christ, p. 134. [25] John x. 10.

the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you."[26] This passage evidently refers to the life of grace, the union with God through charity, a gift imparted to the soul through the merits of Christ, particularly through the sacraments, which, when lost by mortal sin, can, in the present life, be recovered through the same merits of Christ, by timely repentance and compliance with Christ's ordinance regarding the application of His merits for the pardon of sin.

614. Our opponents remark that the term "destroy" applied by the Evangelists to the power of God, is a much stronger word than "kill," attributed to the power of man; hence it must mean something more than what men are able to do; for they can kill, but cannot annihilate, whilst God can do both.

615. We reply that the term "destroy" is intended to designate the awful catastrophe implied in damnation, which involves the blasting of man's original destiny, the loss of infinite, eternal happiness, and the incurring of everlasting woe; that is, the torments of the soul of the wicked immediately after death, and of both their souls and bodies after the final resurrection.

616. The advocates of annihilation, who lay so much stress on the words of St. Matthew, "that can destroy both soul and body," prudently overlook the final words, "in hell," for they point out the endless sufferings of both soul and body in the dungeon of hell.[27] The intelligent reader, by applying the foregoing interpretation of the two parallel texts of St. Matthew (x. 28) and of St. Luke (xii. 5), will easily refute the writer in the English *Contemporary Review*,[28] who thinks he has cornered the orthodox believers in eternal punishment by the following interpretation of St. Matthew's text: "Surely, to say that to destroy or to kill both soul and body means to keep them both alive in a state of everlasting torture is to falsify the meaning of words, or, to speak mildly, to apply them in a non-natural sense."

The sophism of the *Contemporary Review* is easily exposed by remarking that the writer takes for granted what he fails to prove; namely, that the words "kill" and "destroy" in St. Matthew's text must be understood as signifying annihilation. When he shall have done this, we shall exercise our right of examining the argument upon which he bases his deduction.

617. There are many passages of Holy Scripture, in which the word "destroy" occurs, but none of them can be taken as implying the blotting out of existence. The following text of St. Paul is most suitable to our purpose, but our adversaries steer clear of it, as it associates destruction not with annihilation but with unending punishment. "In a flame of fire, giving vengeance to them who know not God and who obey not the Gospel of our

[26] Id. vi, 54. [27] Matt. x. 28. [28] April, 1872, p. 580.

Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction, from the face of the Lord."[29] What, then, does the destruction of the wicked mean? Precisely what we have stated above, and St. Paul clearly points out, the endurance of eternal punishment.

618. It is scarcely necessary to refer here to the miserable subterfuge of our adversaries who strive in vain to evade the conclusion following from the numerous sacred texts which intimate eternal damnation to the wicked by saying that their eternal punishment consists in their being forever deprived of the gift of existence. Who ever heard that non-existing beings are subject to sufferings and to the torments of hell's fire?

This point may be further illustrated by other texts in which the word "destroy" occurs that cannot be translated by any term signifying annihilation. When the angel of the Lord appeared to St. Joseph and bade him fly into Egypt with the child Jesus and His mother, he gave the reason of his message, saying "For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy Him."[30] Was Herod endowed with the power of annihilation? "And the Pharisees going out made a consultation against Him [Christ] how they might destroy Him."[31] We know that they killed Him; but our opponents, to be consistent, should say that they annihilated Him.

Satan himself is called Apollyon, the Greek word for destroyer; but though he may do a good deal of mischief, he has not been invested with the divine power of annihilation.

Our opponents fare no better when they quote Scriptural passages in which the verb "perish," used in connection with the wicked, is by them interpreted as equivalent to annihilation.

"But these men, as irrational beasts . . . shall perish in their corruption."[32]

"Behold here," they tell us, "the ultimate lot of the wicked. They perish, that is, cease to exist, like irrational animals."

Such is not the meaning intended by St. Peter, as is clearly seen from the contents of the whole chapter, in which he speaks of the awful punishment awaiting the ungodly, who, like the rebel angels, shall be "drawn by infernal ropes to the lower hell."[33]

He foretells the final ruinous fate of those who, like brute animals, exercise no control over their sensual appetites and carnal passions; how, besides damning their guilty souls, they wreck their own bodies also here and hereafter.

619. Man is endowed with two essential attributes—he is free, and he is immortal. By the right use of his liberty and of his mental faculties he can know God, his Maker, obey and love Him and thus make himself happy by attending to the end of his

[29] 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. [30] Matt. ii. 13. [31] Matt. xii. 14.
[32] 2 Peter ii. 12. [33] Id. ii. 4.

creation. Through the gift of immortality he is rendered capable of enjoying happiness for all eternity. To accomplish God's will upon earth and by so doing to secure eternal happiness—this is man's lofty end. But as it is a question here of a free and therefore responsible being, we must carefully distinguish two things; namely, the actual attainment of that end, perfect, everlasting happiness, and the natural tendency to it implanted in man by God. The first is essentially conditional, for it depends on the free co-operation, whenever possible, of the will with the grace of God. The second, that is, the natural aspiration to perfect happiness, of which God Himself is the object, fully capable of satisfying it, is entirely independent of man's will, for it is nothing else but the essential aptitude or fitness of human nature for the attainment and enjoyment of perfect happiness, the exclusive gift of divine goodness. Now, this happiness, to be perfect, requires immortality as a necessary element. From this it follows that immortality constitutes an essential attribute of man's soul, of which he shall never be deprived, whether he finally reaches that perfect happiness for which he was created, or ultimately forfeits it through his own fault by the abuse of his liberty. Annihilation, considered as a punishment, would not only be insufficient to deter man from sin, but would moreover offer an encouragement to the sinner's reckless career, when we consider the strength of ungoverned passions, the intoxicating allurements of carnal pleasures, and the impiety of certain desperate criminals, who bid defiance to both divine and human laws.

620. Moreover, in the theory of annihilationists would not God put it within the power of man to compel the Creator to destroy the creature which He has made for His glory? "The Lord hath made all things for Himself: the wicked also for the evil day."[34] We can understand that man may, by a sinful life, place himself outside the reach of God's love and mercy, but we surely cannot believe that he can place himself beyond the control of God's ruling power and thus evade his eternal destiny. The very thought of such an act involves an absurdity, as it would limit God's omnipotence over His rebellious creature.

Man may, by the abuse of his liberty, by sin, contravene the order of the divine will, which intends his eternal salvation, and thus exclude himself from participation in divine goodness. But, by so doing, unable to escape God's dominion over His creatures, he falls into the order of divine justice by incurring its punishments. This is substantially the reasoning of the Angelic Doctor.[35] (See n. **71.**)

621. To do away with the necessity of future punishment, the following argument has been put forth by the defenders of annihilation: God, they tell us, has full power to chastise the wicked

[34] Prov. xvi. 4.

[35] See Summa, p. i, q. xix, art. 6.

in the present life by pains proportionate to their crimes.

There is more than one answer to this subterfuge. In the first place, is this the plan adopted by divine justice in the moral government of our present world? The history of mankind during the last sixty centuries of their existence proves exactly the contrary. In fact, how many impious men were allowed to enjoy a lifetime of prosperity, and go to their grave without having atoned for any of their numberless crimes!

Moreover, let us suppose that some inveterate criminal is actually enduring intense sufferings here below as a penalty of his misdeeds; he has at hand an infallible means for putting an end to such punishment, and that is suicide. In this case, this criminal would escape both the punishments of this life and those of the next. The former, by ending his own mortal existence; the latter, by annihilation at the hands of God, the very Being whom he had so grievously offended.

How would the matter look from the standpoint of such a sinner? Would it not mean his victory over the Almighty, the defeat of divine justice, and the ultimate triumph of sin?

Behold here another of the many absurdities to which the annihilation theory inevitably leads.

DIFFICULTY IX

622. PARISHIONER.—In looking over my note-book I find that this difficulty was brought up by one of the guests, a Protestant divine of the ultra-broad liberal school. "A temporary punishment may be considered by God's infinite mercy and goodness sufficient to expiate every kind of sins, however grievous and numerous they may be, and to maintain the moral order. Hence we cannot suppose that there is such a thing as an endless hell in the world to come, for such a penalty would be quite unnecessary. As the old dialectician William of Ockham well said: '*Non sunt multiplicanda entia sine necessitate.*'—'We must not suppose the existences of needless things.' And it is according to this principle that Scriptural texts bearing on this subject ought to be interpreted and understood."

623. CURATE.—We meet with this difficulty in the works of modern Origenists, who are also known as Restitutionists, a name invented by themselves. Who can believe, they say, that the pains of hell, endured for hundreds, or even thousands of years, will not suffice to expiate even the most enormous crimes? Why, then, should they be eternal?

In the first place, the objectors assume as true what Holy Scripture shows to be false; namely, that, in the future world, in hell, there is such a thing as available expiation, that is, an atonement intended to cleanse the sinners from their guilt and fit them for the abode of the blessed, which would be transform-

ing hell, the prison-house of the wicked, into purgatory, the abode of the holy souls who departed from this life adorned with sanctifying grace.

624. We must here bear in mind the most wise and absolutely necessary purpose of the divine legislation and its sanction, intended to furnish to men motives which, without tampering with the liberty of their will, are powerful enough to deter and refrain them from the commission of sin. Hence, as St. John Chrysostom pertinently remarks, if not even the conviction of the existence of interminable punishment is, in many cases, sufficient to restrain reckless sinners from evil deeds, what would be the conduct of such desperate characters if they were sure that the infernal pains would finally come to an end? Take away the belief in the eternity of hell and substitute for it the ultimate restoration, or restitution of all sinners, their deliverance from the infernal prison, and reflect on the result. It will then be in the power of any wretched, impious man to confront the Lord of Majesty with such a blasphemous challenge as this: "I know that You can and will punish me for my crimes and I am ready to take whatever penalty You will decree against me. But I know also that there will be a limit to the duration of my punishment, after which You shall have to admit me, however reluctantly, to the happiness of the elect. Now as I have resolved to give full sway to my criminal passions during my lifetime, I willingly accept whatever punishment you will inflict upon me here and hereafter, consoled by the thought that in the end You will have to receive me among your chosen servants, to share with them Your own heavenly beatitude."

Would not this procedure, entirely possible, according to the theory of modern Origenists, be like trampling justice under foot, and making it possible for any contemptible sinner to fling the greatest insult in the face of the Almighty Creator? If we once deny to the Supreme Judge the right of punishing obstinate, impenitent sinners eternally, we reduce Him to a condition utterly unworthy of His sovereign majesty.

The truth of hell's eternity excludes all possibility for any creature to defy and insult its Creator with impunity.

The objector advocates a new rule for interpreting the Scripture, and it consists in this, that we should attribute to its texts not the meaning which they naturally and obviously convey but that which agrees with one's preconceived notions or ideas. It is needless to remark that such novel exegesis is utterly subversive of all divinely revealed truth, for there is no erroneous doctrine that could not be justified on that principle.

In connection with the opinion of the Protestant divine quoted by my parishioner, who contends that a temporal sanction is quite sufficient to maintain the moral order in the world, I will briefly recall an old historical incident. "If I were Alexan-

der," said his friend Parmenion, to the famous conqueror, "I would accept the conditions of peace proposed by Darius." To which Alexander wittily replied: "And I also would do so, if I were Parmenion."

The application is easy enough, and it comes to this: If Almighty God, instead of being what He is, were only a poor mortal like the reverend parson mentioned above, he would, like him, consider a temporary sanction sufficient to enforce and preserve the moral order. Thank God, we are not governed by fallible, weak mortals, but by the infinite wisdom and power of God.

CHAPTER V

DIFFICULTIES X TO XIII

DIFFICULTY X

625. PARISHIONER.—One evening an elderly lady, who seemed to take interest in the discussion on future retribution, was requested and urged to say something on that subject. After some hesitation she arose and spoke as follows: "It strikes me that the thought of hell's everlasting pains is such as to destroy the present joys of life even with God-fearing people, and cannot but mar and poison the pleasures of heaven itself. How can we reconcile so inevitable a result with the Christian spirit which breathes only spiritual gladness and cheerfulness in the Lord? 'Rejoice in the Lord, always: again I say, rejoice,' writes St. Paul to the Philippians."[1]

626. CURATE.—1. This is supposed to be one of the absurd consequences that follow from the Christian dogma of the eternity of hell. We are told that there cannot be any such thing as hell in God's government of the world, for the thought alone of the possibility of incurring that frightful evil makes every Christian shudder with horror. How is it possible for any man, nay, for even the most fervent servants of God, to enjoy a moment of peace, when they think of the danger of incurring so dreadful a calamity! This objection has not even the merit of originality, for it is practically borrowed from an old source. The Roman poet Lucretius wrote, nearly two thousand years ago: "That dreadful fear of hell is to be driven out, which disturbs completely the life of man, overcasting all things with the blackness of death and leaving no unalloyed pleasures."[2]

Experience shows, it must be admitted, that the horror inspired by the fear of hell exerts but little influence upon many people, and least of all upon reckless sinners. Would to God that, in the alluring temptations to sin, and in the intoxicating attrac-

[1] Philipp. iv. 4. [2] De Rerum Natura, l. iii, 37.

tions of lust, such a thought should exercise its salutary effect on man's will! But alas! such is the recklessness of human malice that in many cases the fear of hell does not restrain it from even the blackest crimes. How many inveterate criminals, though fully convinced of the danger of incurring that dreadful penalty by death in sin, still maintain an attitude of haughty, stoic indifference. Men are to be found who, though believing in the existence of hell, and realizing the danger of falling into it whilst living in sin, yet lead—apparently at least—a tranquil life, and abandon themselves joyfully to all the worldly pleasures within their reach. Experience, therefore, disproves the assertion that the thought of hell interferes with the pleasures of life.

2. Rising from earth to heaven, such objectors add that the thought of the existence of hell, and particularly of its endless duration, would be sufficient to mar, nay, utterly destroy the happiness of the blessed in heaven, particularly when we recall the doctrine of theologians who, under the leadership of St. Thomas, prove from Holy Scripture that the blessed in heaven know who among their relations and friends may be suffering in hell.[3]

Who can imagine, they tell us, the piercing affliction and sorrow of a father and a mother safe in heaven, while knowing that some of their dear children are tortured in the flames of hell? How could a spouse relish the joys of heaven when knowing that her dear consort is suffering the pains of the reprobates? Such heart-rending sorrow and pity would be absolutely incompatible with the bliss of paradise, so graphically described by St. John in the Apocalypse: "And God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[4]

There exists more than one solution of this difficulty, which is prompted, not by cool reflecting reason, but by misapplied sympathy and sheer sentimentality.

627. As to these sympathetic feelings, the first thing to be noted is this: We know from divine revelation that the blessed in heaven will be perfectly happy, and that nothing whatever will interfere with their unalloyed bliss. Therefore, it is impossible that any event of the present or of the future world should mar or diminish in the least their complete happiness.

The reasoning of our adversaries is based on an assumption of facts that have no existence in the heavenly abode.

There is a great difference between heavenly and earthly love. The love of God is naturally the rule, model, and pattern of every love toward creatures, such as deserve our affection. As a matter of fact, we love creatures because their traits, qualities, and

[3] Suppl. p. iii, q. xciv, art. 1, 2, 3. [4] Apoc. xxi. 4.

endowments please us. We often deceive ourselves either by considering as a perfection that which is not, or by supposing in our neighbors the presence of qualities and perfections which are not found in them at all. Even vice often becomes an object of love and takes possession of our affections. Now, all these defects and erroneous ideas entirely disappear before the brightness of the beatific vision. The blessed see, admire, and love only the real, true perfections of creatures, that is, those that are deserving of love as being reflections, imitations, and traces of the divine perfections. Hence it follows that the blessed in heaven, whose will is perfectly conformable to the divine will, cannot cherish the least love for those who have eternally separated themselves from God. They are consequently incapable of loving those whom God cannot love, because they chose to remain in enmity with Him for all eternity. The following are some few of the testimonies that should be borne in mind: "Thou, O Lord, hatest all the workers of iniquity."[5] "To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike."[6] "Depart from Me, you that work iniquity."[7] These testimonies evidently prove that the Lord cannot, consistently with His wisdom, goodness, and justice, love impenitent sinners, much less the reprobate human creatures who have wilfully chosen to be God's enemies for all eternity. Now, can we suppose that the blessed, whose will is perfectly united with that of their Creator and Lord, may feel any sympathy with and love those whom He hates and punishes? Here below we never meet with any human being that is entirely stripped of all amiable qualities. So long as he lives the most wretched sinner possesses, through divine mercy, the means of repentance, reform, and conversion. In the present life we are bidden to love sinners, even when, by their evil conduct, they have forfeited all right to our esteem. But things are different with the blessed in the next world. There earthly love is entirely purified and stripped of all imperfections and defects. Hence, all love cherished for the beloved ones upon earth ceases from the moment it is known that they are separated from God and condemned to join the ranks of the reprobates. In heaven all affection prompted only by flesh and blood totally disappears; hence, as the will of the blessed is perfectly conformed to that of God, they enjoy with Him an imperturbable happiness, which nothing can ever diminish or take away. See Part IV, c. V.

628. As to the assertion that the sadness and gloom caused by the thought of future punishment are not in harmony with the Christian spirit, which breathes only cheerfulness and joy, this is our answer: As we learn from both the Old and the New Testament, it is only the just, the God-loving and God-fearing that have reason to rejoice and cherish true substantial gladness,

[5] Ps. v. 7. [6] Wis. xiv. 9. [7] Matt. vii. 23.

for they know full well that future punishment is to be the exclusive lot of the wicked, and that God's faithful servants have been promised an infinite happiness, the cause of everlasting joy, of which they have already a foretaste, in the present life by anticipation.

The Psalmist, contrasting the state of the wicked with that of the just even in this world, while he says of the former, "let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered," he thus writes of the latter, "and let the just feast and rejoice before God, and be delighted with gladness." [8] And our Blessed Saviour, after announcing the eight beatitudes, a summary of the trials and virtues of the just upon earth, thus addresses them: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven." [9]

A few quotations from the charming book of Bishop Keppler entitled, "More Joy," will furnish a fitting conclusion to our present subject: "Everywhere and always it has been observed that true exactitude and earnestness in the service of God are rewarded with serenity of soul and happiness." "Keep a good conscience and thou shalt always have joy. If there be joy in the world, certainly the man whose heart is pure, enjoys it. Such are the sound sentiments of the Following of Christ. (Book Second, Chapter VII.)"

Worldly men possess and secure many joys; still they are without joy. The fact is their joys have no real value; they surfeit, but never satisfy a man. "Possessed, they are a burden; loved, they are a defilement; lost, they are a torment." [10]

A German philosopher makes the following avowal: "I maintain that in the whole course of my life, now fairly advanced in years, I have never found solid, vigorous, or enduring morality anywhere save among those who fear God; not as men commonly fear Him to-day, but as in the old childlike way. Among these, indeed, I found joy in living, a deep-rooted and imperturbable cheerfulness, and the courage to face death without a qualm."

"Blessed is the people that knoweth jubilation." [11]

DIFFICULTY XI

629. Parishioner.—Among the hotel guests there happened to be a Protestant minister distinguished for his eloquence and liberal views. In a brief speech he said: "I preach to my congregation what seems to me a correct, common-sense doctrine, that those who fail to live up to the standard required for salvation need not despair. And why? Because they shall have another chance, an additional trial in the next world. I have studied this question thoroughly and have come to the conclusion that there is no valid reason, either rational or Scriptural,

[8] Ps. lxvii. 2, 4. [9] Matt. v. 12.

[10] St. Bernard, Ep. ciii; More Joy, pp. 88, 89, 90, 97, 98. See St. Thomas, Summa, p. iii. q. 94. [11] Ps. lxxxviii. 16.

for asserting that repentance, reform and conversion are impossible after death."

630. CURATE.—After a grievous, mortal sin has been committed, the sinner then and there becomes amenable to the penalty corresponding to it, eternal damnation, as we have already shown. This is a dogma of Catholic faith admitted also both by schismatic and the Protestant Churches. Sin cannot be blotted out without the action of divine grace and mercy, which Almighty God, faithful to His promises, freely grants on condition of the sinner's repentance. If this condition is not fulfilled, and consequently, the deadly sin, deserving everlasting damnation, is not canceled, the sinner, dying impenitent, inevitably incurs the penalty he has freely chosen by his unretracted offense. Now, a most pertinent question is here asked. To whom does it belong to determine till what time, and on what conditions, pardon of sin may be obtained? Does this belong to the offender, or to the offended party? Who possesses such a right, the guilty creature or the insulted majesty of the Creator?

Common sense, that is, the voice of upright reason and conscience, answers, that the sinner has nothing to say on this point, and that here it is a question of a right belonging exclusively to God. Now, how do we know what has been His disposition, His decree in this regard? Evidently only from Himself, that is, from His own revealed word. And what does His divine word teach us? From it we learn that the time of merit, good works, and repentance is limited to the period of man's present existence. Hence there shall be no available repentance after death. Out of many testimonies the following will suffice: "When the wicked man is dead there shall be no hope any more."[12] "Then shall they call upon me and I [their God] will not hear."[13] "Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation."[14] "Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good."[15]

"For it is easy before God, in the day of death, to reward every one according to his ways."[16] "Before thy death work justice."[17] "If the tree falls to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be."[18] The obvious meaning is that the state of the soul, whether of salvation or of damnation, is finally and irrevocably determined at the particular judgment immediately after death.

"Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath shall come on a sudden and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee."[19]

St. John Chrysostom thus comments on this text: "There is danger in putting off one's conversion: then only there is safety and security, when there is no delay in repentance. Do

[12] Prov. xi. 7. [13] Prov. i. 28. [14] 2 Cor. vi. 2. [15] Gal. vi. 10.
[16] Ecclus. xi. 28. [17] Ibid. xiv. 17. [18] Eccles. xi. 3. [19] Ecclus. v. 8, 9.

not say: There will be time for conversion from evil-doing, for such language greatly exasperates the Lord." [20]

631. The foregoing and other exceptionally clear and uncompromising declarations of Holy Scripture on the imperative necessity of a timely repentance, lose all their meaning, purpose, and efficacy on the hypothesis of a probation after death. In fact, what mean those repeated warnings about the thief in the night, the sudden return of the master of the house, the unexpected arrival of the bridegroom, the two women at the mill, the two men in the field, of whom one was taken, and the other left; what mean those reiterated exhortations of Christ and His Apostle to continual watchfulness but that life is short, the day and hour of death uncertain, and that there shall be no available repentance or reform beyond the grave?

632. That our opponents will not be able to allege one single text warranting a second trial after death we are positively certain, for God's word cannot contradict itself. Moreover, this much is granted by themselves. (See nn. **182, 489.**)

633. To those who tell us that they see no reason why our probation should end with death, we beg leave to suggest the following, which appears to be more than sufficient to satisfy every fair-minded man. It is this:

The determination of the duration and place of our trial, all must admit, depended exclusively on the free will of God; of Him, who has created mankind and assigned to them a destiny. It belonged to Him to prescribe the condition of recompense and prefix the circumstances that would entail punishment on transgressors. Now, it so happens that God's revelation covers the whole ground, for we know with certainty from this infallible word that man's period of merit or demerit is limited to his lifetime; that obedience to His commands is crowned with eternal recompense; and that disobedience is punished with everlasting woe. Hence, in view of these divine provisions, all human devices, speculations, and conjectures on future probation are beside the mark, and utterly useless. The only reasonable inquiry, then, for us to make is not what God might have done, but what He actually did.

An American writer quoted by Mr. Oxenham says: "I have long searched with anxious solicitude for a text in the Bible which would even *seem* to favor the idea of a future probation. I cannot find it." [21]

634. This matter may be further explained by the following illustration employed by St. Thomas: Should a man in a fit of hatred against himself gouge out both his eyes, it is plain that only a divine miracle could restore his sight; a miracle which might be performed, but which he has no right to expect. Hence he will remain practically perpetually blind. And when a

[20] Homily xxii. [21] Catholic Eschatology, p. 145, note.

Christian man, with full deliberation, destroys in his soul sanctifying grace, only a miracle of divine mercy can restore to him the forfeited friendship of God, a miracle which God's infinite goodness is always ready to perform on condition of the sinner's sincere and timely sorrow and purpose of amendment. If timely repentance is refused and the sinner departs from this life in a state of enmity with his Creator, he will have to take the consequences of his rebellious act. But here we must not overlook an important difference or distinction, which is this: In the case of the reckless man that blinded himself, it is only from the dictate of reason that we know that he cannot without rashness expect the miraculous restoration of his sight. But as to the sinner, we are assured by God's own revealed word that, on the other side of the grave, there shall be no chance of penance and reconciliation. Such a fate was threatened to the obstinate Jews by Christ when He said: "You shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sin." [22]

635. Neither can there be any injustice in this provision of the Divine Legislator, for is Almighty God bound to open a new door for pardon because obstinate men in this life did not wish to close the door of sin and carried it with their soul to the judgment seat?

And here it is important to observe with a thoughtful modern writer, Mr. Cazenove, that to fix a point at which probation ends is a right claimed and exercised by every civil government upon earth. All civil authority draws some line, the transgression of which by the rebel or the murderer entails complete and final severance from the gift of earthly life and its enjoyments. Can we reasonably deny to the Sovereign Lord of mankind a right which the overwhelming majority of men concede to political rulers, His representatives on earth?

To the question whether reason alone can decide the matter at issue; namely, prove the non-existence of any further trial beyond the tomb, we have already supplied the argument for a negative answer, and that is the fact that such a disposition essentially depended on the will of the Supreme Legislator, which can be learned only from His own revelation.

Though this is perfectly true, yet our opponents must admit that, on the other hand, human reason can detect no injustice in God's decree, limiting man's trial and probation to the period of his responsible life upon earth.

DIFFICULTY XII

636. Parishioner.—A guest, who had been present at the usual discussion, buttonholed me and insisted on my procuring for him a straightforward answer to this query: "God, being omnipotent, has the power to impede the sins, which, He fore-

[22] John viii. 21.

sees, free beings intend to commit. I ask: Why does He not do so, and thus render mankind thoroughly happy by preventing all the evils and calamities which sin entails both here and hereafter?''

637. CURATE.—Here it is necessary, at the very outset, to distinguish these two propositions: First, God may prevent moral evil, sin. Secondly, God ought to prevent it, and not allow human liberty to act in opposition to man's true end and perfection. We willingly grant the first assertion, which does not in the least imperil our doctrine; but we challenge our adversaries to prove the second assertion, which is far from being self-evident; and, what is more, as we are going to show, such a demonstration is utterly impossible. In fact, the permission of moral evil, sin, is not repugnant to any of God's attributes. Not to His sanctity, because God, in permitting sin, does not will it; on the contrary, He hates it with an infinite hatred, and punishes it in the severest manner. Neither is it contrary to divine wisdom. First, because divine wisdom requires that in the ordinary course of God's providence all created beings should be preserved in existence along with their activities and the laws governing their different operations. Now, as we have seen in Part V, the very nature of human liberty implies the possibility of its abuse, and it is precisely in this abuse that sin, moral evil, consists. Secondly, because the ill use of man's liberty may be utilized for a good end by the Supreme Wisdom that governs the world. ''God,'' says St. Augustine, ''permits evil because He is so powerful and so good as to be able to draw good from evil.'' Not that God wills what is evil in order to obtain what is good, but, supposing the fact of the evil done by the free determination of the human will, He can so order human events as to turn evil into some good. No better example could be alleged than the passion of Christ, whose sufferings, caused by the hatred of the Jews, effected the redemption of the whole human race. Moreover, the permission of evil is not repugnant to divine goodness. First, because the attribute of goodness only requires that God should give to man the means necessary and conducive to his happiness. It is evident that man is never placed in the necessity of sinning; he has, on the contrary, the full power of a lawful, rightful use of his liberty, and of making it subservient to his happiness. If he abuses it and turns it into an instrument of perdition, the fault is all his own. Secondly, because God is governed, in all His actions, by divine wisdom, which requires that He should refrain from intervening to prevent the defections of secondary free causes; as, on one hand, the permission of evil is necessary to maintain to liberty its meritorious character, and, on the other hand, the untrammeled exercise of free will is needed to merit the possession of the supreme good, which alone can fully satisfy all the aspirations of man. Hence, Holy

Scripture calls him blessed who "could have transgressed and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things, and hath not done them." [23]

638. This question has also been asked: Could not a merciful and all-powerful God so act upon man's moral nature as to compel the reformation of the offender, and thus render submission and repentance inevitable?

This would be a compulsory reformation utterly inconsistent with man's moral freedom, and would consequently involve, on God's part, a contradiction in his dealings with a creature, which He made naturally free. True reformation and acceptable repentance presuppose untrammeled freedom and exclude all constraint. A choice made under coercion could not possibly be a test of a virtue deserving recompense. In short, man's meritorious actions cannot be associated with compulsion in any form.

We see, then, that the preceding objection, besides being altogether illogical and irrational, is moreover utterly unjust to God, the Sovereign Creator and Supreme Benefactor, against whose providence it is directed. For it comes to this: "God," says the objector, "has granted me liberty to do good and reach happiness; I used it only to do evil. I am unhappy and miserable and this is only because I freely chose this condition. God, then, is an evil Master and Ruler because He bestowed on me a gift which I myself decided to turn to my ruin."

By way of conclusion, let me allege here a wise thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau, which show that even unsound eccentric writers sometimes bear brilliant testimonies to the truth. They also have some lucid intervals.

"To murmur against God, because He does not prevent man from doing evil is to complain because He has given him so excellent a nature, because He endows his free actions with a morality that ennobles him in the extreme, and because He has given him the right to practise virtue. What more could Divine Omnipotence do in our behalf? Could God place a contradiction in our nature and bestow a reward for doing good on him who hath not the power to do evil? What! To prevent man from doing wrong was God to give him only instinct, and make him an irrational beast? No, O God of my soul, I will never reproach Thee for having made me to Thy image and likeness in order that I should be free, good, and happy as Thyself." [24]

DIFFICULTY XIII

639. Parishioner.—A guest begged leave to read an extract from an English agnostic, the late James Mill, apparently endorsed by his son, John Stuart Mill, and, as no one objected, he did so. It was as follows:

[23] Ecclus. xxxi. 10.

[24] Emile, l. iv, c. 61.

" 'Think of a Being who would make hell, who would create the human race with the infallible foreknowledge—and therefore with the intention—that the great majority of them should be consigned to horrible and everlasting torments.' This view of the matter," concluded the reader, "is my reason for rejecting all belief in the existence and eternity of the hell taught or rather invented by the Catholic Church."

640. CURATE.—It is sad to come across such blasphemous utterances in the works of men of undoubted mental ability. But there is an obvious explanation of this strange phenomenon. Their intellect has been befogged and warped by the heretical misrepresentations and perversions of Christian doctrines concerning man's supernatural destiny, and the dispositions of Divine Providence in that regard. Their views have been poisoned by Calvinistic predestination theories, which they took as the genuine, authentic teaching of Christianity.

First of all, we emphatically reject the assertion that God created hell with the express purpose of putting the great majority of the human race there. No, such a thought is downright blasphemy, for God created man for happiness, and supplies him with all the means needed to attain it, and one of the chief means is the threat of punishment to the transgressors of His laws. Hence hell is the choice of the sinners themselves; it is the result of their own free acts.

Here Mr. James Mill, like other assailants of the Catholic doctrine of eternal punishment, identifies it—perhaps more from ignorance than from perversity—with the Calvinist heresy of antecedent reprobation, decreed by God for His own glory and independently of the foreseen wickedness and impenitence of men. For a brief statement of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, founded on immemorial tradition, and diametrically opposed to the horrible Calvinist creed see nn. **406, 680.**

In the second place, we may ask: Does God's prescience or foreknowledge of man's actions, whether good or evil, tamper with his liberty? Certainly not, as it has been proved above (n. **548**). Hence if man, abusing the gift of free will, transgresses God's holy laws, forfeits the eternal happiness of the just, and incurs the everlasting misery of the wicked, he can only blame himself for the loss of his blissful destiny and the merited infliction of never ending woes.

CHAPTER VI

WHY DID ALMIGHTY GOD DECREE TO CREATE MAN FREE?

DIFFICULTY XIV

641. PARISHIONER.—I am of the opinion that if some reasons could be assigned why Almighty God decreed to bestow on men the precious gift of liberty, though He knew that some would make an ill use of it, many prejudices and false notions would be dispelled, and that there would be a juster and more correct understanding of the wisdom, goodness, and justice of Divine Providence in the government of the world.

642. CURATE.—As to the reasons why Almighty God preferred to endow men with free will, though He foresaw they would at times make an ill use of it, and thus cause their own perdition, we find them ably summarized and presented in the article by Right Rev. John S. Vaughan on the "Existence of Moral Evil," which was published in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* of November, 1899:

"If we may be allowed, with all reverence, to put the matter in a human way—God, having determined to create man, had still to choose between two courses. For the sake of greater clearness, we may suppose that the Creator mused within Himself, saying: 'I will create man. I will endow him with intelligence, and reason and the capacity of knowing Me, his Maker. But shall I make him a mere piece of mechanism, a machine, an automaton, moved only, as the brute beasts are moved, by internal and external stimuli; and necessarily obedient to the strongest impulses; or shall I, on the contrary, make him free? I will weigh the matter, and compare the advantages and the disadvantages. If I decide to withhold the gift of free will, there will be no sin. True, man will be as innocent as the fishes that swim in the waters, and as immaculate as the flowers that glisten by the roadside. Just imagine, we should then contemplate a world unstained by any moral guilt, a world without sin!

"Unquestionably. But if this would give us a world without sin, it would give us also a world without virtue, a world void of all moral excellence. Man would have no more sin than a rock or a stone; but then he would have no more goodness, no more holiness, no more sanctity, than a rock or a stone either.

643. "On the whole, then, it would seem better to extend to man the opportunities of practising virtue, even though such opportunities carry with them the risk of sin. God saw the advantages of granting man free will, so He resolved to grant it.

Among the considerations which determined Him in His decision, perhaps we may venture to suggest the following five as among the most important.

"*First consideration.*—If man were not endowed with free will, then the entire race must forever remain wholly incapable of the least act of virtue.

"*Second consideration.*—If free will was not to be the prerogative of man, then God would not be freely served by any of His visible, earthly creatures. Sun, moon, and stars, together with the earth, and all the earth contains, serve God and obey Him. Truly, but theirs is not a voluntary service. They obey because they cannot do otherwise. But God wishes to be served, at least by His rational creatures, with a spontaneous and voluntary service; with the homage of the heart and of the affections. And even though all might not employ their free will aright, yet God foresaw that many would.

"*Third consideration.*—We may suppose that God was the more ready to grant the favor, because whosoever abused His free will and committed crime, would not only be punished for his transgression, which would restore the balance of justice, but would be obliged to acknowledge that he had none but himself to blame. He would realize that if he ran counter to the divine commands and received condign punishment, it would be wholly and entirely his own doing and in no way imputable to God.

"*Fourth consideration.*—Another reason moving God to give man free will was, that such a system opens out to God a vastly wider and grander scope for the exercise and the manifestation of His divine attributes, especially of His power and His justice in punishing those who deliberately scoff and set His will at defiance, and still more of His infinite love and generosity in rewarding those who voluntarily and lovingly serve Him, and who exercise their freedom merely to honor and glorify His name. Further, it would also enable Him the more easily to show forth His boundless mercy and compassion, in pardoning and washing out sin, and in receiving even the greatest and basest rebel—if only repentant—back into His grace and favor.

"*Fifth consideration.*—And there is yet another consideration that must have strongly influenced God to grant man free will, even in spite of the enormous sins and appalling crimes that He foresaw would sometimes be the consequences of this dangerous gift. I mean the consideration that He, the Omnipotent and the Omniscient, is able to bring good out of evil—not only out of physical evil, but, what is immeasurably more divine and marvelous, out of moral evil; out of positive and heinous crime; out of hatred, jealousies, vindictiveness, and bloodthirstiness. Yes, in giving man free will, God knew that sins—and great

sins—would result; but He also knew that He was and is powerful enough to turn even the very sinfulness of sinners to the ultimate advantage of the just, and to the increase of His own eternal honor and glory.

"'Do not think,' writes St. Augustine, 'that God has no purpose in view by tolerating the wicked in this world, and that He obtains no good from their existence. For every evil man is permitted to live either that he may be converted or that through him the just man may be tried.' †

644. "Thus, although the condition of this or that particular individual may be worse by reason of his possessing free will, yet we must bear two facts in mind. The one is, that not even so much as one individual need suffer, except through his own fault; and the other is, that whatever amount of suffering free will might bring to the individual who makes an evil use of it, it will nevertheless always be to the advantage of the Church in general, and of the race as a whole: in some measure, even here upon earth, but above all in its effects upon the permanent state of the blessed in heaven.

"After a due consideration of this point, it is impossible not to see that the permission of moral evil affords one of the proofs—not, indeed, of God's want of goodness—but rather of the limitless extent of His goodness, and of His extraordinary solicitude for the development of the higher and more heroic forms of virtue in His subjects."

CHAPTER VII

DIFFICULTIES XV TO XX

DIFFICULTY XV

645. Parishioner.—A Protestant preacher, a minister of the Universalist church of the town, was requested to tell why he held and taught the doctrine that in the end all will be saved, and sing in heaven God's mercies for all eternity, as foretold by King David.[1] He was evidently prepared to comply, for without hesitation he stated his case as follows:

"God, it is true, has threatened eternal punishment, as we read in the Bible. But He does not inflict it, for He has a secret purpose of mercy to save the finally impenitent. I allow that the punishment is said to be eternal, but no such thing was ever meant. It is only a mode of expression used by God as a kind Father to deter His children from sin. And this is the most wonderful illustration of the Lord's infinite goodness. Many surprises await us in the next world, but this will be the most as-

† Fourth Lesson in Coena Domini. [1] Ps. lxxxviii. 2.

tounding of all, to find that not one individual of the vast human family on earth will be missed in heaven. This is in substance the creed of the Universalist Church, and I do not know of any other that gives us a better idea of the infinite goodness and mercy of God."

646. CURATE.—I must, first of all, observe that God has not merely threatened eternal pains, but He has also plainly intimated that He will inflict them. Our Lord predicted for the wicked a "resurrection unto judgment,"[2] that is, unto damnation, and that they shall depart into "everlasting punishment."[3] Now these are not mere threatenings but predictions, and whatever God predicts shall infallibly happen. The wicked will be damned not because their damnation is foretold, but it has been foretold because the Omniscient Judge has foreseen their obstinacy and final impenitence. It is, then, just as certain that the finally impenitent will be doomed to everlasting punishment as that the Lord is infinitely veracious, for all His predictions are to be faithfully verified. "The Lord is faithful in all His words."[4]

As eternal punishment is a just retribution of mortal sin, unretracted and unrepented, even to the last dying breath of the offender, it is not only right for God to threaten it, but it is likewise right for Him to inflict it. If such a penalty were not a just award, it would be wrong to threaten it, however desirable the ends that might be obtained. The question then is reduced to this: Has God revealed the doctrine of endless punishment? That He has done so in the clearest language has been abundantly proved in Part VI of this book. What, then, is the mere suggestion of the possibility of a secret, divine purpose of ultimate deliverance of all sinners, but casting doubts upon God's veracity? If any one threatens what he never intends to inflict, he is guilty of falsehood. May God ever tell a lie by uttering empty menaces? But, they tell us, instances are found in the Bible itself, from which it plainly appears that God threatened certain punishments, which He did not inflict. Thus He threatened to destroy Nineve, and yet He spared it.[5] But this and similar examples are far from favoring the cause of Universalism, for in the case alleged and like occurrences it is always a question of conditional threatenings. In fact, why was the prophet Jonas sent to warn the inhabitants of that wicked city, if this were not so?

647. The theory of final general salvation and heavenly bliss for all sinners, propounded and defended by the Universalists, is completely nullified by this other argument. Doubtless eternal happiness is promised by the Lord to the righteous. But what does such promise amount to according to their theory? If, ac-

[2] John v. 29. [3] Matt. xxv. 46. [4] Ps. cxliv. 13.
[5] Jonas iii. 10.

cording to their view, Almighty God, without violating any of His attributes, may threaten what He never intended to execute, so He may utter promises which He never meant to fulfil. Such a consequence would unsettle our entire belief in the word of God as a revelation of His dealings with mankind. As the schoolmen say: "*Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus.*"—"At fault in one point; unreliable in all." The objection we are refuting means simply this: God may threaten, it is true, but He is too good to inflict. Sin may be very heinous in God's sight, but not so heinous as to warrant Him to chastise it. We cannot help wondering that this is exactly the form of the original temptation from the devil in the Garden of Eden. "And the serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die the death."[6] The Evil One, mind well, does not deny that God threatened, but denies that He will inflict. What greater dishonor could be done to the Most High than to admit that He has spoken and at the same time to deny that He told the truth and meant the opposite of what He said!

DIFFICULTY XVI

648. PARISHIONER.—The same Universalist minister the next evening said that his previous argument might be clinched by the following consideration:

"There is," he said, "a remarkable difference between promises and threatenings. He that promises passes over a right to another and thereby stands obliged to him in justice and faithfulness to make good his promise. If he fails to do so, the party to whom the promise was made is not only disappointed, but also injuriously dealt with. But in threatenings it is quite otherwise. He that threatens keeps the right to punish in his own hands. He is not obliged to execute what he has threatened and may without failing in veracity remit and abate as much as he pleases of the punishment that he had threatened."[7]

649. CURATE.—This is a somewhat hoary sophistical reason, borrowed from Tillotson, an Anglican prelate of the seventeenth century, and is found in the fourth volume of his sermons. Hence the Universalists, who propose it in our day, have not even the merit of originality in presenting it. In the first place, we are glad to find that the reverend gentleman is liberal enough to admit that the lot of the righteous is safe, for God's promises made to them of eternal happiness must be faithfully fulfilled. But what about the threats of everlasting punishment? May God refrain from executing them? By no means, and the principal reason is that here it is a question not only of mere threats, but also of solemn predictions, and whatever God predicts or foretells will be infallibly carried out. "Heaven and earth,"

[6] Gen. iii. 4.

[7] Reid, Everlasting Punishment, pp. 379–380.

says Christ, "shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."[8] "Amen, I say unto you, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled."[9]

We ask our adversaries: Is there no reality corresponding to God's threatenings? How do you explain, then, the following positive announcements issued from the mouth of Him who is eternal truth? "The rich man also died and he was buried in hell."[10] "None of them is lost but the son of perdition."[11] "He will bring those evil men to an evil end,"[12] Acting in accordance with the merciful designs of God, who entreats, warns, and threatens in order that by timely repentance and persevering virtue we may escape the punishment and gain the reward, let us not deceive ourselves by such interpretations of His words as will defeat His purpose, and cause our everlasting woe.

650. On the hypothesis of our adversaries the Universalists, in spite of the most clear proclamation of our Divine Saviour in the Gospel of St. Mark, that "their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished,"[13] repeated three times, their worm, after all, is not deathless, and the fire is not going to burn them at all. And the chaff, which St. John the Baptist proclaimed shall be burned with unquenchable fire,[14] according to the Universalists, has a far better lot in store, for it shall be some time or other gathered with the wheat into the barn. And thus, as none shall be condemned to everlasting punishment, the angels shall be dispensed from the task of separating the wicked from the just, though our Blessed Lord foretold that they shall have to do so. "The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from among the just."[15] Hence the dear Lord and Supreme Judge will have only one sentence to pronounce. He will not say: "Depart from Me," but He will welcome all to the kingdom of His Father, "Come, ye blessed."

Whoever reflects that a denial of the orthodox Christian doctrine concerning the divinely foretold condemnation of the wicked completely nullifies Christ's most impressive warnings and threats, cannot but be convinced that all theories opposed to the traditional dogma of hell's eternity for the impenitent are both unscriptural and absurd.

651. If Christ, according to the neo-Origenists, did not tell the truth when He threatened sinners with eternal punishment, neither did He do so when He promised to the just everlasting life. To those who answer that by His threats the Lord meant to deter men from evil-doing, we reply, that if He could utter a false menace to restrain men from sin, He could likewise make a false promise to induce them to virtue. Such is the reasoning of St. Gregory the Great.[16]

[8] Matt. xxiv. 35. [9] Ibid., v. 18. [10] Luke xvi. 22.
[11] John xvii. 12. [12] Matt. xxi. 41. [13] Mark ix. 42–47.
[14] Matt. iii. 12. [15] Matt. xiii. 49. [16] Mor. xxxiv. 16.

DIFFICULTY XVII

652. PARISHIONER.—One of the guests, a professor of philosophy, said with an air of triumph and defiance: "Though I have read many books dealing with the subject now under discussion, yet I must say that I have not as yet seen in any of them a plausible answer to the following question: Why does Almighty God create souls whose eternal damnation He foresees?"

653. CURATE.—The gentleman was evidently speaking on behalf of the objectors who take it for granted that no satisfactory answer can be given to that objection. They consequently believe that they are justified in concluding that there is no such thing as eternal damnation even for a single human soul. Thus God's honor is safeguarded and the triumph of His all-embracing mercy is secured.

This is called by the Universalists their Achilles, a clinching argument, which they deem to be unanswerable. It will be my task to disabuse them of their illusion and to prove that far abler pens than mine have solved this difficulty long ago, and shown that nothing can be concluded from it against the attributes of divine goodness, wisdom, and justice, and hell's eternity for the impenitent.

As this objection comes in contact with several points of revealed doctrine, I shall have to discuss it at some length, so as to close all avenues to a reply. The full import of the objection we are dealing with, is reduced to this: "God owes it to His wisdom, goodness, and justice not to create souls which, He foresees, will be guilty of sin, will die impenitent, and should therefore he condemned to the endless torments of hell."

If God, on account of the perfection of His attributes, cannot create a soul, whose final wilful impenitence and consequent damnation He foresees, then all the souls which He has created and shall create to the crack of doom are infallibly certain of their eternal happiness, for hell being closed, done away with, the only alternative left for all human beings is the bliss of heaven for all men no matter how wicked they may have been.

Armed with this assurance, resting on the supposed claims and requirements of God's own attributes, human liberty will run riot, recognize neither rule nor restraint, and will enjoy the full power of abandoning itself to an unchecked gratification or of its disorderly passions, and give full scope to all the seductions and allurements of evil. God becomes, as it were, powerless before the reckless sinner. The day will come when the Supreme Judge, instead of punishing him for his rebellion, will be forced to open to him the gates of heaven; for, according to the view of our adversaries, the mere fact of creation carries along with it the promise of an assured happiness, a happiness commensurate with the endless duration of the soul's existence beyond the grave. In this supposition not even the most obdurate sinner

can be excluded from heavenly glory. What becomes, then, of the essential difference between good and evil; between virtue and vice; between St. Peter and Nero, his murderer; between Blessed Thomas More and the lustful tyrant, Henry VIII; between the martyrs and their executioners? If sin, however grievous and multiplied, cannot deprive the offender of heaven's happiness, it will cease to inspire fear and horror; and the criminal, made bold by impunity, will defy God's anger, because the mere fact of his existence assures him of the forthcoming eternal bliss, notwithstanding all his iniquities. Behold here the legitimate and inevitable consequence of the theory of the Universalists; a consequence, which reveals in the clearest light the falsity of the principle from which it is logically derived. A principle that leads to consequences destructive of all moral restraints and that is most injurious to God's infinite perfections, cannot but be radically wrong. No healthy, harmless, pure water can flow from a poisonous spring.

654. That many enormous crimes are perpetrated by men through abuse of their liberty, no one can deny. Now, I ask: Should the Almighty, whose laws are thus set at defiance and trampled under foot, punish crimes and sins, or should He not? If He should, we again ask, *when* must He chastise the guilty—in this life or in the next? That many criminals escape all punishment in the present life, even from the arm of earthly powers, is a self-evident fact. We proved in Part VII that the temporary punishments that may be inflicted in this life are utterly insufficient to deter men from crime, and make due reparation to God's offended majesty. Then shall they be punished in the next world? Not at all, if we admit the reasoning of our opponents that God cannot, consistently with His attributes, create souls which He foresees are to be punished on account of their sins.

655. As to the other alternative; namely, that God should not punish sin, the absurdity is too glaring to deserve a refutation. A God either unable or unwilling to punish sin would be inferior to the meanest, most insignificant legislator that ever lived; hence, He would be no God at all. Nay, He would be inferior to the chief deity of the ancient Romans, whom they called *Jupiter Tonans*, Thundering Jove, who is described as the avenger of the guilty by the three following ancient writers:

Homer.—"Though Olympian Jove does not avenge at once, he shall avenge."[17]

Herodotus.—"The gods inflict heavy punishment on great crimes."[18]

Euripides.—"The power of the Deity is called forth slowly, but then it is unerring, chastising those who do things contrary to its laws."[19]

[17] Iliad. iv. 160. [18] Hist. ii. 120. [19] Bacch, 882.

656. St. John Damascene in his dialogue with the Manicheans, who had proposed to him the very same difficulty we are now dealing with, sets down some principles and thoughts that will throw considerable light on the subject:

"Why," asks the Manichean, "did God create Satan?"

"It is through His goodness to make him happy."

"But God foreknew that, owing to his rebellion, he would be punished and made unhappy."

"That does not matter, since it is only through his own fault that he damned himself."

"Agreed: But how is it that an infinitely good God, knowing that Satan would be damned through his own fault, created him notwithstanding this prevision?"

The learned Damascene concludes the dialogue by thus answering the last question of the Manichean:

"If the prevision of future sins that will be freely committed by the creature should prevent God from exercising His goodness in creating, evil would prevail against good, and the malice of the creature would overcome the goodness of the Creator."

A similar thought was uttered by St. Leo the Great who said: "Neither angelic nor human malice could deprive God of His benevolence toward His creatures." [20]

St. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury and Doctor of the Church, discusses the question thus: "Why did the devil forfeit original justice? Because he willed it. And why did he will it? Only because he willed it and resolved to become the author of his own woes."

657. Here I am reminded of the clever answer given by a Catholic child to the following question put by the teacher of the Sunday-school class:

"Did God create the devil?"

"No, God made him an angel, and, by committing sin, he made himself a devil." [21]

There can be no other answer. This is the character of the malice and essential evil of sin; by being the personal and only cause of his own calamities the sinner, of his own accord, places himself beyond the beneficent bounty of Him who, being essentially good, desires nothing more than to shower the wealth of His gifts on the creatures He made.[22]

658. We append here some additional reflections justifying God's action in creating souls whose rebellion and impenitence He foreknows.

To be, to exist, does not depend on ourselves, but on God alone. But to be good depends both on God and on ourselves. God, on His part, gives us the power to be good. As the sun He sheds

[20] Serm. de Nativ. Domin. [21] Ps. xviii. 8, and Ps. cxviii. 130.
[22] See Enchiridion Patr., p. 839.

the rays of His bounty on all His creatures. Both a prophet and an Apostle bear testimony to this truth: "The Lord hath set His tabernacle in the Sun, . . . and there is no one that can hide himself from His heat."[23] St. John the Evangelist writes of the Incarnate Word: "That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world."[24] If we will it, we may share in His goodness here below and enjoy the beatifying light of His presence hereafter. But if we are blind to our own eternal interests and refuse to love what is good, we thereby exclude ourselves from participating in it, both in this life and in the next.

In Holy Scripture hell and its punishments are constantly declared to be of man's, not of God's, making, and the inevitable result of man's moral freedom. According to divine revelation, God created man with every power and faculty for enjoying perfect happiness: hence it is clearly God's will that he should be eternally happy. He has made marvelous provisions for the effacement of sin, the only obstacle to the attainment of heavenly bliss, and for restoring the most inveterate transgressors to His favor. The conclusion of our Saviour's parable, "Many are called, but few are chosen," presents no difficulty, for it simply means that God does the calling, but man makes the choice; that is, God calls men to faith and salvation, but few respond to His invitation and co-operate to His grace. As we read in Ecclesiasticus,[25] "Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him."

Is it just, then, that on account of man's resistance Divine Goodness should refrain from imparting His benefits, of which the first and root of all others is the gift of existence? Human malice must not triumph over Divine Goodness and close the gates of God's beneficence toward His creatures. Should human malice, bent on sin, be allowed to triumph and render barren the beneficent dispositions of God's bounty and liberality, then no free being should be created, for, possessing the gift of freedom, it might abuse it, and thus render itself amenable to eternal pains. (See nn. **550, 557, 559.**)

DIFFICULTY XVIII

659. PARISHIONER.—As I was attentively recalling your answer to the previous question this other difficulty occurred to me: Why did Almighty God not decree to bestow the gift of creation only on those angelic and human beings which He foreknew would either make a rightful use of their liberty, or, if they sinned, they would obtain forgiveness by sincere and timely repentance?

660. CURATE.—This seems to me a correct answer: As such

[23] Ps. xviii. 6, 7. [24] John i. 9. [25] Ecclus. xv. 18.

a decree would depend exclusively on the divine will; and, as there exists no revelation, that we know of, telling us what God might do in that other order of providence, we poor mortals are not at liberty to scrutinize God's secret counsels, lest, by doing so, we should incur the punishment threatened in Holy Writ: "He that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed by glory." [26] For to search into God's incomprehensible majesty and to pretend to sound the depths of His wisdom is exposing our weak understanding to be blinded with an excess of light which it cannot comprehend. When we are confronted with the secret mysterious counsels of the Creator our attitude should be one of humble submission to His inscrutable designs, and we should exclaim with St. Paul: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For, who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor?" [27]

As to the reasons why Almighty God preferred to endow men with free will, though He foresaw that they would at times make ill use of it, they have already been given from the distinguished writer, the Right Reverend John J. Vaughan.

661. We must, however, observe that if, for the reason alleged, our opponent's question cannot be directly answered, Catholic truth would remain untouched, for, as shown above, nothing could be inferred from such silence against the justice of eternal punishment, or against the divine attributes of God's wisdom, goodness, and justice in the creation of free beings which He foreknew would incur eternal punishment by the abuse of their liberty and final impenitence.

If God should refrain from creating free rational beings because of the possible abuse that some might make of their liberty, malice—we again repeat it—would indeed triumph over goodness and countless multitudes of human creatures would be debarred from partaking of God's priceless gifts here and hereafter. As Christ says in His Gospel, "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will? is thy eye evil, because I am good?" [28]

The Lord endowed man with the gift of liberty to enable him to secure, by his free co-operation with grace, the end of his existence, the possession of heavenly happiness, and thus perfectly realize God's merciful and bountiful designs in his regard. Man, we admit, may, by the abuse of that marvelous prerogative, act contrary to God's benevolent designs and thus forfeit his own happiness. What is thus but the possibility of sin, which unthinking men condemn as if it were a blot on creation, whilst it is nothing, after all, but the very condition of our infinite inferiority to God and of the superiority of our nature over the

[26] Prov. xxv. 27. [27] Rom. xi. 33, 34. [28] Matt. xx. 15.

brute creation. The possibility of abusing man's most eminent endowment, his liberty, may indeed be called an imperfection, but right reason will not allow us to blame Almighty God on this account; for, as we have shown above, imperfection is the inevitable condition of every created, contingent being, and it can become prejudicial to man only when he wills it. Impenitent sinners are truly the authors of their own damnation and of all consequent woes: hence of such the Archangel Raphael said: "They that commit sin and iniquity are enemies to their own soul."[29] "The Lord trieth the just and the wicked; but he that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul."[30] But we know from divine revelation that our natural imperfections, particularly the most notable, that of liability to sin, will be remedied by grace in the life of glory. Hence, as we proved in Part IV, the angels and saints in heaven, though retaining their freedom, are no longer liable to sin.

DIFFICULTY XIX

662. PARISHIONER.—Another admirer of the late Henry Ward Beecher stated that this distinguished divine had devised a theory which is supposed to solve all difficulties against eternal punishment drawn from God's attributes. He said in one of his sermons: "Future punishment may be eternal, and yet not a single individual may be eternally punished."[31]

663. CURATE.—This is doubtless good news for impenitent sinners, as it lifts that pressure which Holy Writ left upon them by this utterance of St. Peter: "If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"[32] It practically says to such persons: "It is, of course, much better for you to be good here and now; but if you cannot persuade yourselves to that, don't be afraid; there will be another chance in the next world, and you may be saved there; as a practical thing, it will be quite possible for you to reform and change in the future life." As the same reasoning may be addressed to other recalcitrant sinners, it follows that poor Satan may after all have no human inmate in his abode.

This theory of the late Dr. Beecher is based on two gratuitous suppositions: First, he takes it for granted that there will be for sinners a second trial in the next world. Secondly, he assumes that this second trial may be successfully undergone by every sinner, who will thus escape punishment. We have disposed of both these assumptions under Difficulty XI, to which the reader is referred.

But, strange to say, the learned divine flatly contradicts himself, for in the same sermon he writes: "The prospect for any

[29] Tob. xii. 10. [30] Ps. x. 6. [31] Defense, p. i, p. 74.
[32] I Peter iv. 18.

man who goes out of this life resolute in sin may well make him tremble for himself."

664. Moreover, divine revelation assures us that hell exists and is inhabited by a large number of spirits, Lucifer and his followers, the fallen angels, punished for their rebellion against their Maker.

We find in the Gospel the following sentences of Christ: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."[33] "And Jesus said to them [the seventy-two disciples]: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven."[34] St. Peter writes: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments."[35] However much then we may wish to keep hell empty, we cannot empty it of the bad angels, the demons.[36]

665. But are there human creatures in hell? Let us see what the Church, our highest living authority upon earth, has to say on this question. She says much less than some people would expect, and this for the best of reasons; namely, the fact that she possesses no explicit revelation on this point. Hence, we cannot expect from her a positive, dogmatic definition. As to the case of the traitor Judas, no official pronouncement shall ever be needed to determine his fate, as we have the words of the Judge Himself, Christ, who said of that wretched renegade disciple: "It were better for him, if that man had not been born."[37] "None of them is lost but the son of perdition."[38]

However, the silence of the Church cannot be taken as implying what the Universalists claim; namely, that, even if there be a hell, no human being will meet the lot of the rebel angels. And why so? There are several reasons which, taken all together, point to the conclusion that some human creatures, at least, have gone, are going, or will go to hell. What may be the number or proportion of mankind that will miss their happy destiny and incur eternal punishment, no one knows and nobody should venture to determine. To satisfy hypercritics, we subjoin the following justification of our assertion:

A. At the last judgment Christ pictures a real separation, saying: "The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire."[39] "And He [the Son of man] shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left."[40]

666. How misleading such a picture would be as a plain foreknowledge of the lot befitting the wicked and of the happiness

[33] Matt. xxv. 41. [34] Luke x. 18. [35] 2 Peter ii. 4.
[36] See St. Thomas, Summa, p. 1, q. lxiii, art. 9. [37] Matt. xxvi. 24.
[38] John xvii. 12. [39] Matt. xiii. 41, 42. [40] Matt. xxv. 33.

reserved to the just, if at the day of judgment God should find that no separation was needed, and should therefore never have been foretold; if in the end they were all to be sheep and no goats; that the words, "depart, ye cursed" would never be pronounced. And the same may be said of Christ's sentence: "And these [the wicked] shall go into everlasting punishment." [41] Now, against the obvious and overwhelming impression conveyed by these and kindred passages that might be alleged, as for example, Apocalypse xx. 15, we cannot find any valid argument favoring the ultra-merciful theory of the Universalists. For the texts adduced evidently imply that some will actually be found to incur condemnation. Neither must we be surprised at this final termination awaiting impenitent sinners. For when we consider the appalling amount of real wickedness, and that of the most wilful, malicious, and persistent kind, prevailing in the world, the idea that such perversity and impiety should finally escape all penalty would so stultify the whole arrangement and provision of God's omnipotence and justice as to be absurd and unthinkable in the extreme.

667. As nothing has been definitely declared by the Catholic Church through her official medium of infallible teaching, the Supreme Pontiff or the General Councils, on the question of the comparative number of the saved and the lost, the matter is open to free discussion. Hence different opinions have been held by theological writers, which may all be reduced to two separate schools. There is what we may call the school of the rigorists, holding the view that the lost will outnumber the saved. The followers of the mild view, on the contrary, maintain that the saved will outnumber the lost. But it was left to the Universalists of our times to devise the extreme liberal view emptying hell of its inhabitants altogether.

668. We confess that we entertain a strong sympathy for those writers who take the moderate, milder view of the number of the damned, and who hold that they will be in the minority. But when it is proposed that their number be reduced to zero, such an interpretation appears altogether unwarranted when we reflect that the whole tenor of the Bible teaching and of the Christian tradition stands so strongly on the other side.[42]

Moreover, all that has been said in refutation of the anti-christian theories of Universalism, Restitutionism, and Annihilationism furnishes an additional proof that all the wicked, whom those theories suppose to be finally saved, or reduced to nothing, are the very ones that will prevent hell from remaining empty.

[41] Matth. xxv. 46.

[42] See the Bombay Examiner for April 17, 1915, edited by the distinguished journalist, Father E. Hull, S. J., from whose article "Is Anybody in Hell?" we have borrowed the gist of our answer.

669. Some contend that if we consider the general brevity of man's life, the earthly trial on which his eternal lot depends seems altogether too short. Hence, they conclude, there is a valid reason for believing that the Lord God has at His disposal some secret means by which He can bring about the conversion of the most obstinate characters in the world to come, leaving, of course, their liberty intact.

To this we answer: The objectors, by assuming that man's earthly probation is altogether too short, plainly impeach God's justice and wisdom, as if He denied to man sufficient time for his choice between the service of the Lord and that of Satan. A theory or supposition that leads to such an unwarrantable conclusion must be radically wrong. During the brief span of man's life does not Almighty God place before him good and evil, grace and sin, heaven and hell, and leave the free, untrammeled choice to himself? "Before man," says Holy Scripture, "is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him." [43]

Moreover, when we reflect on the awful danger of making a bad choice, a disaster quite possible in the course of a long life exposed to numerous temptations, is it not an immense benefit that the time of our trial has been made much shorter than it might have been and actually was in the patriarchal age? It is precisely for this reason that Holy Scripture says:

"The just man, if he be prevented with death, shall be in rest. . . . He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. . . . Therefore God hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquities." [44]

It is plain that the speculations we are now refuting are absolutely useless and beside the mark, for here it is a question not of what God might have done, but of what He actually did in the present order of providence—a matter wholly depending on His free, sovereign will, made known to us in Holy Writ.

That the existence of a future trial cannot be admitted has been fully demonstrated in the preceding part.

DIFFICULTY XX

670. PARISHIONER.—I have one more difficulty to propose: it is as follows:

If it were true that the devils, even when out of hell by divine permission and wandering through the earth, are suffering the very intense pains of fire, how are we to account for the fact that in spite of such painful endurance they occupy themselves in deceiving and tempting men, and at times indulge in signs of playful levity. Suppose a man were placed on a burning pyre, would he, whilst in that dreadful situation, engage himself in anything concerning others?

[43] Ecclesiasticus xv. 18. [44] Wisdom, iv. 7, 11, 14.

CURATE.—There is more than one reply to this difficulty. In the first place, it is a mistake to apply the purely spiritual substances the condition of human corporal beings; as the mode of suffering of the former, that is, the power of endurance, though real, must differ essentially from that of the latter. For beings are affected by external agents according to the manner of their existence. The old schoolmen used to state this fact by saying: "*Operatio sicut passio sequitur esse.*"

Besides, we know the motives that impel the evil spirits to tempt men and drag them into perdition. They are chiefly two: First, their undying hatred against God, under whose mighty power they are made to feel the penalty of their rebellion. And as the Omnipotent is entirely beyond their reach, they strive to wreak their vengeance upon men, His creatures. Secondly, the demons are induced to seek the ruin of men's happy prospects by the extreme envy and jealousy they entertain against them; for human creatures, though vastly inferior to the fallen angels in natural endowments, are nevertheless destined to occupy in heaven the thrones left vacant by the rebellious angelic hosts.

This is the truth the Church conveys to our mind in her liturgy for the Feast of the Guardian Angels.

> "*Nam, quod corruerit proditor angelus,*
> *Concessis merito pulsus honoribus,*
> *Ardens invidia pellere nititur*
> *Quos coelo Deus advocat.*"
>
> "For, since that from his glory in the skies,
> Th' apostate angel fell
> Burning with envy ever more he tries
> To drown our souls in hell."

—Hymn for First Vespers. From the Roman Breviary, translated by John, Marquess of Bute.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

671. From the preceding discussion on the chief difficulties raised against the Christian dogma of the eternity of hell, there follows the conclusion, that, whilst, on the one hand, we solve all the objections put forth by our opponents, they, on the other, are utterly unable to refute our proofs, or advance any solid argument to justify their denial of that article of revealed Faith.

They likewise fail to show that there exists any contradiction between this belief and the claims of right reason. This fact

does not at all surprise us for, as the late Pius IX wrote, in his encyclical *Qui Pluribus* of 1846: "Reason and revelation have no cause to fear each other, for they are both derived from the same immutable source of truth, the Lord God." [1]

As to the assertion of Rationalists that Christian believers, and Catholics in particular, are bound by their creed to accept as God's own word any doctrine, however absurd, when proposed by the Church as an article of faith, we need only call the attention of our adversaries to the following testimonies from the pen of the two greatest theologians that Christendom has produced:

St. Augustine writes: "God forbid that our subjection with regard to all that forms part of our faith should prevent us from inquiring into the reason of what we believe, since we could not even believe, if we were not endowed with reason." [2]

St. Thomas formulated the doctrine of the Church on this point by holding that: Reason could not and would not believe, if it did not see that it is necessary to believe.[3]

As we have stated elsewhere, we fully subscribe to the tenet of several distinguished modern theologians, Cardinal Mazzella, Fathers Perrone, Hurter, Palmieri, Knoll, Jungmann, and others, who hold that reason alone, left to its natural light, cannot apodictically demonstrate the truth of eternal punishment. But, at the same time, we maintain with the aforementioned theologians that, when that dogma is once firmly established by the authority of divine revelation, human reason not only fails to disprove it, but, on the contrary, fully confirms it by strong arguments chiefly derived from ethical principles. Several of such arguments we have developed in the Remarks that form the subject of Part VIII of this work, which fully ratify the truth of the well-known adage that there cannot be any real conflict between the teachings of divine revelation and the dictates of sound reason, a truth lately defined as an article of faith by the Fathers of the Vatican Council (1870), in these terms:

672. "Although faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason, since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind; and God cannot deny Himself, nor can truth contradict truth. The false appearance of such a contradiction is mainly due either to the dogma of faith not having been understood and expounded according to the mind of the Church or to the inventions of opinions having been taken for the verdict of reason. We therefore define that any assertion opposed to the truth of enlightened faith is entirely false." [4]

[1] D. Enchiridion, p. 435. [2] Enchiridion Patr. p. 617.

[3] Summa, p. i, q. i, art. 8.

[4] Constit, De Fide Catholica. D. Enchiridion, p. 478. For an exhaustive and very able discussion on this question see Murray, "Reason and Faith," vol. iii of his Theological Essays.

PART X

AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE TESTIMONIES OF PROTESTANT SECTS AND THEIR MINISTERS ON THE ETERNAL PUNITIVE RETRIBUTION

CHAPTER I

BELIEF OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY IN THE ETERNITY OF PUNITIVE SANCTION

673. The Reformers of the sixteenth century, whilst ostensibly pretending to aim at the internal reformation and renewal of the Church of God, as a matter of fact led their followers to revolt against her, and aimed at the perversion or abandonment of the principal truths believed till then by all the Christian communities united with the Roman See.

They consequently destroyed the unity of faith among several European nations, cut many millions off from the Catholic Church, and robbed them of the chief means of salvation and supernatural life. Not less than forty-one errors taught by Martin Luther were condemned by Pope Leo X in his Bull issued June 15, 1520.[1]

674. We here briefly recall some of his heretical errors referring to the subject of our book:

1. No soul, though free from actual, personal sin, can enter heaven before the last general judgment.
2. The just man commits sin in every good work he performs.
3. No one is sure that he is not always sinning.
4. Human liberty has been lost by original sin; and, on this account, man sins mortally even when he does what he can to live righteously.
5. The souls in purgatory are not sure of their salvation—at least, not all of them.
6. The souls in purgatory are continually sinning.

To save Christendom from such doctrinal disruption and the fatal consequences to which it inevitably leads, the Fathers of the Council of Trent and the Popes that ruled the Church during its celebration, raised their mighty voice, branded with anathema every heresy professed by the so-called Reformers, and thus preserved in all its purity and integrity the deposit of revealed faith.

[1] D. Enchiridion, pp. 257–260.

675. Though the doings of the sixteenth century heresiarchs were as destructive as they were disastrous, yet they found some fundamental truths of Catholic Faith so deeply rooted in the Christian conscience of the people that they did not venture to tamper with them and left them substantially intact. Among these truths is reckoned the common belief of the faithful in the everlasting duration of both the remunerative and the punitive sanction of God's laws.

It would be impossible to exhibit in detail the eschatological teaching of the multitudinous Protestant confessions, both earlier and later, within the limit of this work. But there is hardly any need for it, because, as Mr. Oxenham observes, practically all of them, down to the Nine Articles of the Evangelical Alliance, organized in 1846, are agreed in asserting the doctrine of eternal punishment. Hence, Dr. Schaff in his "Creeds of Christendom," rightly classes among points coming within the consensus (agreement) of Latin, Greek, and Evangelical Christianity, the following dogmatic truths: "Heaven and Hell, the eternal blessedness of the saints and the eternal punishment of the wicked."[2]

We here append the official statements found in the Formularies of Faith of Protestant sects:

676. I. The Confession of Augsburg, drawn up by Melancthon, and presented to the Emperor Charles V. at the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, was the first and most authoritative public document of the Lutheran Reformation. As late as 1853, it received the solemn recognition of an assembly of over fourteen hundred ministers of the Lutheran, Reformed, Evangelical, and Moravian communions held at Berlin. Article 17, of Christ's return to judgment, contains the following: "They also teach that in the consummation of the world [at the last day] Christ shall appear to judge, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give unto the godly and the elect eternal life and everlasting joys; but ungodly men, and the devils, shall He condemn unto everlasting torments." They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that to condemned men and the devils there shall be an end of torments. Here we see the modern Origenists and the Unitarians condemned by a Protestant Tribunal, which shows itself to be on this question in full harmony with Papal Bulls.[3]

677. II. The Second Helvetic Confession, compiled by Bullinger and published at Zurich in 1566, holds the first rank among the Calvinists, as does that of Augsburg among the Lutherans. "We believe that infidels—unbelievers—are cast at once into hell *(in Tartara)* from which the living cannot deliver them."[4]

In Chapter xi, Article 14, they condemn those who thought

[2] Oxenham, Catholic Eschatology, p. 210. [4] Id., p. 301.
[3] Schaff, vol. iii, pp. 17, 18.

that the devils and impious men will some time be delivered from their pains. We see here the so-called Restitutionists denounced.[5] In Article 13 of the same chapter we read: "Unbelieving and impious men will descend into hell *(Tartara)* along with the devils, there to be forever burning, and never to be delivered from their torments."[6]

678. III. The Heidelberg Catechism, in general use among the Reformed Churches of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Scotland, and the United States of America, to the question, "Will God suffer disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?" the following answer is given: "By no means; but He is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as actual sin, and will punish them in just judgment in time and eternity."[7] And further: "Is then God not also merciful?" "God is indeed merciful, but He is likewise just; wherefore His justice requires that sin be punished with everlasting punishment, both of soul and body."[8]

679. IV. For English readers a more immediate interest attaches to the Westminster Confession of Faith, adopted in 1647, and approved by the General Assembly of the Scotch Presbyterian Church. From that day to this it constitutes the chief doctrinal standard in Scotland and elsewhere. In Chapter XXXII, n. 1, we read: "The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die, nor sleep), having an immortal subsistance, immediately return to God who gave them."[9] "The souls of the righteous being made perfect in holiness are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness."[10]

The duration of both retributions, reward and punishment, is distinctly stated in Chapter XXXIII, on the Last Judgment: "Then shall the righteous go into everlasting life; but the wicked, who knew not God, and obeyed not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments."[11]

680. Calvin's cruel and unscriptural doctrine on predestination, independently of man's work, was endorsed by the Westminster Assembly, and is thus expressed: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others are foreordained to everlasting death. Angels and men are thus predestinated unto everlasting life out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, to pass by, and to ordain

[5] Id., p. 257. [6] Id., p. 257. [7] Id., p. 310. [8] Id., p. 311.
[9] Eccles. xii. 7. [10] Schaff, vol. iii, pp. 670, 671. [11] Id., p. 672.

them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice. The elect only have been redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved."[12] This is the horrible Calvinist doctrine adopted by the General Assembly of the Scotch Presbyterian Church. (See n. **406.**)

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681. V. In the revision of the Articles purporting to contain a summary of the faith of that Church, the forty-two original Articles were reduced to thirty-nine. The forty-second article, in which eternal punishment had been directly asserted, was left out. In view of this deliberate omission, it was decided by the courts that the Articles do not inculcate this doctrine, and that clergymen obliged by the law to subscribe them, are not bound to believe and teach the doctrine of eternal punishment. Such a decision, whether issued by the Privy Council or any court of the English realm, is in direct contradiction to the eighth article, in which it is distinctly stated that the following three creeds are to be received and believed; namely, the Nicene, the Apostles', and the Athanasian, or *Quicumque*. This last symbol of faith asserts the doctrine on everlasting punishment in the following clear, unmistakable language: "They that have done good shall go into eternal life; but they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

It is important to remark that in the revision of the Thirty-nine Articles approved by the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, made in the year 1801, at the General Convention held in Trenton, New Jersey, the Athanasian Creed was expunged. A short time ago the same thing was done by the Anglican ministers of Canada. What the ministers of the Established Church may hold nowadays on the Christian dogma of endless retribution for the wicked is difficult to know, especially in view of the decision of the courts cited above.

CHAPTER II

MODERN PROTESTANT CREEDS ON THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT

682. The following quotations will bring our statements of non-Catholic so-called Evangelical denominations fairly up to date, and thus prove the unbroken unanimous belief of Christian Churches on the great truth of eternal retribution:

I. The Congregational Union of England and Wales, adopted A. D. 1833: Article XIX. "They believe that Christ will finally

[12] Westminster Confession of Faith, A. D. 1647, Ch. iii, nn. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, vol. iii, pp. 608–610.

come to judge the whole human race, according to their works; that the bodies of the dead will be raised again; and that Christ, the Supreme Judge, will divide the righteous from the wicked, and receive the righteous into life everlasting, but send away the wicked into everlasting punishment."[1]

II. Declaration of Faith of the National Council of Congregational Churches, held at Boston, Mass., June 14–24, 1865:

"We believe also in the organized and visible Church, in the ministry of the Word, in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the resurrection of the body, and in the final judgment, the issues of which are eternal life and everlasting punishment."[2]

III. The Baptist Confession of 1688, adopted early in the eighteenth century by the Philadelphia Association of Baptist Churches. Its creed on future retribution is identical with that of the Westminster Confession of 1647.

"Chap. XXXII: "The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness."

Chap. XXXIII, 11: "The righteous shall go into everlasting life, but the wicked shall be cast into eternal torments."[3]

IV. The New Hampshire Baptist Confession, A. D. 1833:

Article XVIII: "We believe that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy."[4]

V. Confession of the Free Will Baptists, A. D. 1834, 1868:

Chapter XXI: "Immediately after the General Judgment, the righteous shall enter into eternal life, and the wicked will go into a state of endless punishment."[5]

VI. The Confession of the Waldenses, 1655.

They adopt the Augsburg Confession, which contains the following Article XVII: "Christ shall give unto the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys; but ungodly men and the devils shall He condemn unto endless torments."[6] They also hold Calvin's horrible creed.

Moreover, they use the Athanasian Symbol as a part of their creed taught to the children; they accept the Apostles' Creed, and admit the possession of eternal life as the recompense of the just.[7]

VII. The Confession of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, A. D. 1829:

"The written word declares the ample provision God has made for men's salvation, His determination to punish the finally im-

[1] Schaff, vol. iii, p. 733. [2] Id., p. 736. [3] Id., pp. 671–672.
[4] Id., p. 748. [5] Id., p. 756. [6] Id., pp. 17, 18, 761. [7] Id., pp. 757, 764

penitent with everlasting *destruction*, and to save the true believer with an everlasting salvation." [8]

Here it is important to observe that the word "destruction" [9] cannot be understood as implying annihilation, for the Cumberland Confession has adopted without alteration Chapter XXXIII of the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which the following statements occur: "Then shall the righteous go into everlasting life; but the wicked shall be cast into eternal torments." [10]

VIII. Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva, A. D. 1848:

Article XIV: "We believe that the unjust shall go to everlasting punishment, whilst the just shall rejoice in life everlasting." [11]

IX. The doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance, 1846, adopted at the organization of the American Branch of the Evangelical Alliance in January, 1867:

Article VIII: "The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the eternal punishment of the wicked." [12]

The official, authentic documents we have cited prove that though the Protestant denominations we have mentioned radically differ in many of their tenets from the doctrines of the Catholic Church, yet they substantially agree with her on the Christian dogma of eternal retribution.

683. Hence, from the oldest Protestant Confession, held at Augsburg, A. D. 1530, to that of the Evangelical Alliance, organized A. D. 1846, and adopted by the American Branch in 1867, that is, during the lapse of 337 years, the leading Protestant denominations have officially and publicly proclaimed their belief in the future retribution of eternal happiness for the just, and eternal punishment for the wicked.

As to the reasons, motives, or arguments that may have induced the large majority of modern Protestant ministers, divines, and Biblical scholars to reject the old creed of their own respective denominations on the endless duration of future retribution, it is for them to inform their flocks and the public at large.

Meanwhile we beg leave to call the attention of such recalcitrant pastors to the affirmative orthodox views expressed in the next chapter by prominent members, professors, and Biblical scholars of their own denominations; and we would advise them to try to justify their negative attitude by refuting these affirmative views. If they succeed in so doing, they will prove to the world that, even if they are not right, they are at least consistent in their negative position.

[8] Id., pp. 771, 772. [9] See nn. (**615–618, 682**). [10] Schaff, vol. iii, p. 672.
[11] Id., p. 785. [12] Id., p. 828.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN DOGMA OF EVERLASTING RETRIBUTION HELD AND DEFENDED BY MINISTERS AND SCHOLARS OF PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

684. Should any one think that the doctrine professed by Protestant sects in the sixteenth and subsequent centuries on eternal retribution [1] has been abandoned by sectarian ministers, he would show a complete ignorance of the real situation of things. We are glad to acknowledge this fact, though some unenviable exceptions must be taken into account, particularly during the last forty or fifty years, and in our own days. A special chapter of this Part will be devoted to these dissenting brethren. Meanwhile it is gratifying to be able to reckon among orthodox upholders of the doctrine of future retribution a galaxy of distinguished, representative men, who, though differing from us in many points of revealed faith, yet have the courage to challenge the criticisms and sneers of unbelieving, voluptuous worldlings by boldly maintaining this fundamental article of the Christian Religion. Nay, as their extant writings show, they establish that dogma with such arguments as their opponents are utterly unable to refute. Hence it will be quite a relief to turn aside from the discordant and mutually destructive writings of Canon Farrar, E. White, R. W. Dale, Andrew Jukes, J. Baldwin Brown, and other adversaries, to the words of the authors referred to above, not less eloquent than learned, in full harmony with the traditional belief of Christendom and in perfect accord with the natural, obvious meaning of Holy Scripture.

Numerous other scholars of different Christian denominations may have, no doubt, followed the noble example of those recorded in our book, but we had to confine our references to those with whose writings, name, and position we happen to be acquainted.

685. The following are our chief sources of information on the present subject:

I: "The Future Life, a Defence of the Orthodox View, by the Most Eminent American Scholars," in two parts, London, 1878. For brevity's sake, we shall use the term "Defense" to denote this work.

II: "That Unknown Country, or Future Retribution, according to the Opinions of Scholars and Divines of the Present Times," Springfield, Mass., 1890. This work will be indicated by the initial letters "U. C."

686. After giving the name of the writer in alphabetical order, we shall cite one or two short passages which bear undoubted

[1] See nn. (**675–683**).

testimony to his orthodox, conservative view on the matter at issue. It is understood that the fact of our quoting the correct sentences of an author on the point we are discussing cannot be construed into an implicit endorsement of some of his erroneous views on other topics.

1. Angus, Prof. Joseph, M.A., D.D., Baptist:

"Eternal life for the righteous, and eternal torments for the wicked, this is the verdict of Sacred Scripture. To preach to sinners a larger hope, that is another chance, or the final salvation of all men is not the Message of the Gospel." [2]

2. Bartlett, Rev. S. C., D.D., President, Dartmouth College:

"As to the doctrine of endless punishment, I accept the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of those to whom He committed the Organization and Legislation of His Church. The doctrine is in harmony with other cardinal teachings of the Scripture. It accords with the divinely revealed view of the appalling nature of sin, of its immeasurable malice, which compels us to admit that there is a correspondence between its character and its threatened doom." [3]

3. Buckley, Rev. James, Editor of the *Christian Advocate*, Methodist Episcopal, New York:

"I believe that Jesus Christ was a teacher come from God, and though the doctrine of eternal punishment is indeed awful, I accept it upon His authority; nor can I comprehend the mind of any one living upon earth that can take any other ground. It is not true that this belief fills the soul with unsupportable horror, for not one innocent or penitent soul is condemned. Punishment is the exclusive lot of those who have chosen death in sin rather than life in Christ." [4]

4. Cheever, Rev. George B., D.D.

Referring to Canon Farrar, who advised the erasing from the English Bible the three obnoxious words, "damnation," "hell" and "everlasting," he writes: "Those are the most dangerous seducers who suggest to sinners that which tends to lessen their dread of sin and the fear of God. Doctrines that are not built upon Scripture foundation, though ever so pleasing, will but cheat men." [5]

5. Conrad, Rev. F. W., Editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, Philadelphia:

"In the discussion of the doctrine of future punishment, we propose to consider it as it is presented in the Word of God. The mind cannot conceive, nor language express, more terrible descriptions of the doom of the impenitent than those contained in Holy Writ. In this essay we shall briefly treat of the awful character of that punishment, its eternal duration, and also of its justice, both confirmed by the testimony of conscience. Ac-

[2] U. C., p. 95. [3] Defense, p. i, p. 41. [4] U. C., p. 171.
[5] Defense, p. i, p. 99.

cording, then, to divine authority, as revealed in the inspired Record, particularly in the New Testament, the abode of the lost is no house of correction or reform, or a place of disciplinary chastisement. We reject the theory of annihilation, or state of eternal unconsciousness, and hold, on the contrary, that the reprobates will be alive, conscious, and, in the highest degree, susceptible to suffering. The unending character of the inheritance of the saints, and the unending punishment of the lost are taught by every true interpretation of the Scripture.'' [6]

6. Crosby, Rev. Howard, D.D., L.L.D., Presbyterian, late Chancellor of New York University:

''What we know of the condition of man after death, we know from an outside revelation. Appealing then to the written revelation, we ask: What does the Bible say concerning a future state? This is the sole question that we have to consider. According to the Bible there is an everlasting punishment for the wicked; and this retribution will be the consequence or result of unforgiven sin in the soul, subjecting it to perpetual tortures. Hence hell's suffering is practically self-inflicted.'' [7]

7. Cummings, Rev. Joseph, D.D., LL.D., Methodist Episcopal, President of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois:

''The life beyond the grave is by its nature unending. We fully subscribe to the doctrine of the Church in all ages, that in a future state the wicked shall be excluded from the presence of the Lord, and will forever suffer the penalty of sin. The true theory is that punishment is the inevitable sequence of one's own chosen conduct. The reward of God is unerringly in accordance with the deeds done in the body.[8] The now favorite theory that punishment is reformatory and preventive is proved false by most abundant evidence of Sacred Scripture.'' [9]

8. Cook, Rev. Joseph:

''The current blazing discussion of future punishment is distinguished by no new evidence, but by new disputants. The progress of democracy and of luxury in the world has brought to the front in theology a communistic, and an aristocratic party. The former is the patron of what I call Bohemian Theology, and the latter of the sofa theology. [Prominent in hotel parlors, where loafers rock themselves in comfortable cushioned armchairs and sometimes talk of hell's myth.] By as much as any man or woman is dear to me, by so much I should advise them to be shy of trusting their eternal future to a hope of repentance beyond the grave. It is historically incontrovertible that the overwhelming majority of the most astute and learned, the most serious and saintly people, who have studied the Bible upon their knees, and have acted it out, have understood it to teach the endlessness of future punishment.'' [10]

[6] U. C., p. 189. [7] Ibid., p. 209. [8] 2 Cor. v. 10. [9] U. C., p. 223.
[10] Defense, p. i, p. 141.

9. Dabney, Prof. R. C., in Union Theological Seminary, Virginia:

"To be sure, if hell can be disproved in any way that is solid, true, and consistent with God's honor and man's good, there is not a trembling sinner in this land that would hail the demonstration with more joy than I would. Can any of you give that demonstration? Let us hear what message the Lord Himself has been pleased to send us out of His Word. And when we look there, the most striking fact is that the clearest, the most dreadful declarations of the eternity of the unbeliever's ruin are those uttered by Jesus, who must have felt that hell is real." [11]

10. Helffestein, Rev. J., D.D.:

"The doctrine of eternal punishment should be faithfully preached for the following chief reasons:

"(a) For the simple fact that it is divinely revealed. God has annexed to His law that fearful penalty in order to throw around that law a suitable protection and to warn men of the consequences of transgression. It is not kindness but cruelty to keep men in ignorance of the divine retribution of crime.

"(b) Ministers of the Gospel are under sacred obligation to declare the whole counsel of God—entrusted with the message of salvation or damnation, it is not only at the peril of their hearers, but at their own peril, that they withhold any portion of God's truth.

"(c) The faithful preaching of this awful truth is required in order to keep alive the public conscience, and restrain men from sin; and these are the very motives for which God revealed it, and the prophets and apostle preached it." [12]

To the silent, timid preachers, referred to by the Rev. Helffestein, we may apply Virgil's saying: "The crisis requires no such aid, nor such defenders." [13]

And a far greater authority says of them: *"Non hos elegit Dominus."*—"The Lord chose not them." [14]

We are here reminded of the "dumb dogs not able to bark" [15] the reproach addressed by the Lord to the Jewish pastors of old.

11. Fulton, Rev. Justin D., D.D.:

Taking Henry Ward Beecher to task for saying in one of his sermons that the Scriptural expressions referring to eternity simply mean long periods of time, Mr. Fulton writes:

"The folly of such an utterance, to call it by no worse name, needs but a moment's consideration to make it apparent. It is a sword that cuts both ways. If *for ever* means nothing regarding hell, it means no more when used in reference to heaven.[16] It snaps the cable of hope, and compels the voyager to eternity to drift on an unexplored sea amidst storms and currents, without a chart and without a compass. It is the height of pride and

[11] Ibid., p. 1, p. 57. [12] Ibid., p. 1, p. 52. [13] Aen. ll. 521.
[14] Bar. iii. 27. [15] Is. lvi. 10. [16] Matt. xxv. 46.

sheer madness for any man to attempt to set aside and nullify the declarations of Almighty God on the eternal punishment of the wicked." [17]

12. Fowler, Rev. C. H., D.D., Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

"The doctrine concerning hell is fundamental in Methodist teaching, which is thus briefly summed up: After the general judgment, the righteous, with their risen bodies, are received into heaven, the final and eternal home of all the blessed; and the wicked, their souls and bodies being reunited, are cast into Gehenna or hell, into everlasting punishment." [18]

13. French, Rev. W. H., D.D., of United Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio:

"The picture of hell is not revolting to enlightened, uncorrupted reason. Equity of the retributive principle is engraven in man's heart as well as written in God's word. 'Everlasting' undeniably means perpetuity, when applied to happiness, and as unequivocally so when applied to woe and sorrow."

> "Time is the seed-plot for eternity;
> Eternity the harvest-field of time." [19]

14. Gerhart, Rev. E. V., D.D., L.L.D. Professor in the Theological Seminary, Reformed Church, Lancaster, Pa.:

"Wrong-doers retain in the next life their false self-assertion and aversion to God. Therefore there cannot be a transition in the world to come from penal misery to beatitude. Neither rewards nor punishments are arbitrarily or optionally bestowed by God. They are a consequence of divine justice and of the action of man's free will." [20]

15. Godet, Rev. Frederick, D.D., Professor in Theological Faculty, Neuchatel, Switzerland:

"We are all agreed on this point—that a future punishment awaits those who have wilfully broken the moral law, whether of conscience or of Sinai, and who have obstinately rejected the pardon offered to them by the preaching of the Gospel. If such a course of action did not end in punishment, the divine law would be without any sanction, and the most solemn declaration of the Scriptures would be of no effect. As to the character and duration of punishment in the world to come, I know of three principal solutions: 1. The Universalist solution, that punishment will issue sooner or later in conversion and salvation of all the condemned. 2. The Conditionalist solution, which denies that the soul is essentially (naturally) immortal, and holds that the obstinately wicked perish out of existence, while believers receive eternal life as a gift of God. 3. The Eternalist solution, which

[17] Defense, p. i, p. 65. [18] U. C., p. 303. [19] Ibid., p. 325.
[20] Ibid., p. 341. See Gal. vi. 7, 8.

maintains an immortality of conscious suffering. Is, then, the idea of a punishment without end one in which we must rest? For my part I believe that this is indeed the impression under which the Scriptural declarations leave us, when taken in their simple and natural sense. And I am persuaded that such a revelation is adapted to our moral needs." [21]

687. 16. Goodwin, Rev. E. P., D.D.:

"These are my answers to the following objections to the doctrine of endless punishment:

"A. Our opponents hold that the terms 'eternity,' 'everlasting,' 'for ever and ever' mean an eternal duration only when applied to the happiness of the blessed. This is not only vicious exegesis, it is a direct insult put upon the Author of the Divine Word and another upon Christ. to read in the same verse everlasting life, meaning unending blessedness, and everlasting punishment, meaning retribution that ceases. (See n. **546.**)

"B. A second objection to the doctrine is based upon the probability, if not certainty, of a probation after death. The message which Christ was charged to deliver to men must certainly have been perfect and complete, covering all the provisions made by Divine Providence for the salvation of men. We still have, thank God, that message in the preaching of Christ registered in His Gospel. He never expressed a desire for the conversion of the lost after death. He never let fall a word which so much as hints at any such future probation. We find Him, on the contrary, always urging those who listened to Him to repent lest they should perish.[22]

"C. As to the objection drawn from the perpetual existence of evil, we answer that it cannot be shown that God cannot permit the existence of evil, a natural consequence of man's liberty. If then God can permit the beginning of evil, there is no reason why He may not allow its continuance." [23]

688. 17. Goulburn, Rev. Edward Meyrick, D.C.L., D.D., Dean of Norwich:

Everlasting Punishment, Sermons Delivered at St. James' Church, Piccadilly, London, 1880:

Sermons First and Second: "Everlasting Punishment not Inconsistent with God's Justice." [24]

Sermon Third: "Everlasting Punishment not Inconsistent with God's Love." [25]

Sermon Fourth: "Everlasting Punishment not Inconsistent with God's Purpose in Creation." [26]

Appendix: "On the limitations of the human understanding in apprehending God and His ways." [27]

We have attentively perused these sermons and feel perfectly

[21] U. C., p. 399. [22] John viii. 21. [23] Defense, p. i, p. 101
[24] Pp. 1–25. [25] P. 57. [26] P. 97. [27] P. 260.

justified in stating that few authors have been found that surpassed Mr. Goulburn in the defense of the orthodox doctrine of the eternal punishment awaiting unbelievers and impenitent sinners in the world to come.

18. Harris, Rev. George, D.D., Professor of Christian Theology in the Theological Seminary of Andover, Mass.:

"Future punishment is unending. The reprobates, who are cast out from God's kingdom, are the incorrigible, the irreclaimable, the hopelessly impenitent." [28]

19. Hendrix, Rev. E. R., Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South:

"The doctrine of endless punishment has been substantially the uniform topic of Methodist preaching, because of the acceptance of the doctrine as a matter of unquestioned revelation; and on account of the rational grounds on which it commends itself to practical men. Any rejection of eternal punishment logically leads to the abandonment of the whole scheme of redemption. We reject the theory of a second probation as unscriptural, and therefore false and deceptive. The words of Christ on the final retribution of the impenitent are more terrible than all others." [29]

20. Holt, Rev. J. W., of the United Brethren in Christ. Editor of the *Religious Telescope,* Dayton, Ohio:

"The wicked who depart out of this life rejecting Christ and salvation, and unpardoned because unrepenting, will dwell in a place separate and apart from the righteous, and in this place of sin and torment they suffer everlasting punishment. Probation ends with this life." [30]

21. Huntington, Rev. F. D., D.D., LL.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Central New York:

"Jesus will save every soul that consents to be saved. Irremediable loss to those who reject this offer. Any preacher who desires to preach a probation after death may hold himself justified in undertaking it, if he can state and include the doctrine in words taken out of the Bible in their natural sense. The debate must be carried on where the battles of orthodoxy and heresy have always been fought, on the Word of God." [31]

22. Jacobs, Rev. Henry E., D.D., Norton Professor of Systematic Theology, Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa.:

"No ground for believing in another trial after death, or any termination of future penalty. No encouragement whatever can be afforded by any word of Scripture for any such doctrine as Universalism, Restorationism, Annihilationism, or Conditional Immortality. The state of remorse for unbelievers begins at once after death, to last forever." [32]

[28] U. C., p. 427. [29] Ibid., p. 443. [30] Ibid., p 495.
[31] Ibid., p. 509. [32] Ibid., p. 545.

23. Lewis, Rev. A. H., D.D. Seventh Day Baptist, Editor of the *Outlook and Sabbath Quarterly*, Plainfield, N. J.:

"We accept Christ's words: 'These [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting.'[33]

"All punishment is the resultant, the fruitage of man's independent volition, and is not the effect of divine retaliation. The messages of Christ are invariably addressed to man in this life, and never beyond. Forgiveness is always conditioned upon repentance and obedience, as required by justice."[34]

24. Long, Rev. Daniel A., D.D., LL.D., President of Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio:

"Christ never spoke of pardon hereafter. Man determines in this world what is to be his condition in the next. Men, who are without the Gospel, are yet amenable to God's law implanted in the heart. Disobedience to God's written law is worse than sinning against the light of Nature. Future punishment is not remedial, nor vindictive, but vindicatory and endless. The doctrine of eternal retribution is not to be overthrown by false philosophies and theologies, for it is inwrought by God in human reason."[35]

25. Luthardt, Rev. Christopher E., D.D., Ph.D., University of Leipzig, Germany:

"The language of Jesus Christ in Matthew xxv, 31, 41, 46, involves many propositions, among them these:

"A. There is a final judgment for all men, with one only alternative, salvation or condemnation.

"B. The consequences of this doom are eternal. Utterly vain are all attempts made to evade this awful fact by the doctrine of restoration, conditional immortality or soul annihilation.

"C. The sentence of Christ is pronounced according to human conduct in the bodily life."[36]

26. McArthur, Rev. R. S., D.D., Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New York:

"Future punishment is eternal. The term 'retribution' is especially and technically applied to the wicked. Universal belief of mankind that in the future life evil will be punished. All nations and religions partake of this belief. It is a law of moral gravitation and not an arbitrary enactment, that punishment follows wrong doing. The heathen, not knowing the Gospel, are judged by another standard.

"God's Revelation is the all sufficient authority for believing that the doom of those who reject Christ is one of unutterable wretchedness and remorse, without end.

"The Scriptures are no warrant for the doctrines of annihi-

[33] Matt. xxv. 46. [34] U. C., p. 587. [35] Ibid., p. 603. [36] Ibid., p. 619.

lation, a new probation, final restoration or universal salvation. We believe that the word of God plainly teaches that all trial ends in this life and that the punishment of the impenitent is everlasting." [37]

689. 27. Kent, Rev. Cephas, Ripton, Vt.:

"The subject of my essay is Christ's words on the duration of future punishment. The question whether our Saviour taught the doctrine of eternal punishment is to be determined by appeal to His verbal utterances on the subject and to the general outlook of His instructions. If these do not help us to give us a clear, definite and unhesitating answer, it must remain in doubt till a new revelation is given. But leaving aside all discussion on the Hebrew and Greek nouns and adjectives signifying endless duration, we find a very strong, irrefutable argument in favor of an eternal duration in the striking passage of Our Saviour's discourse, recorded in Mark's Gospel ix. 43–48 inclusive, where the eternal duration of punishment is asserted, not by the words 'forever or 'everlasting,' but by denying that it will have an end. Setting forth the doom of the wicked, He thrice repeats His appeal to the 'unquenchable fire, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished! Let the quibblers about the meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words referring to our subject refute the above-mentioned proof from Mark's Gospel, if they can. If those terms mean not an endless, but a limited duration, how will they reconcile their interpretation with the plain import of the above text?" [38]

28. McCleod, Rev. Thomas B.:

"Canon Farrar, in a letter to the *Guardian,* asserts that he especially repudiates Universalism as a dogma. How is this assertion to be reconciled with the following words preached in Westminster Abbey?: 'Be sure that Christ's plenteous redemption must mean that earth's sinners—far off it may be—shall be transformed into God's saints.' Surely this is enough to satisfy the most hopeful Universalist; hence Canon Farrar's letter repudiating the dogma of the Universalists is a piece of sheer hypocrisy. The Canon holds out to sinners his individual promise of 'Eternal Hope'. We ask: Where can there be any hope for the soul which has resisted the tender love and earnest appeals of the Gospel—the warnings, entreaties, threatenings of Providence and grace in this life?" [39]

29. Nelson, Rev. Doctor:

"I doubt whether any of my readers will be able to reconcile the following two statements of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher:

"A. 'I will never let go of the truth that the nature of God is to suffer for others rather than to make them suffer.'

"B. 'The relation between sin and retribution belongs not to

[37] Ibid., p. 641. [38] Defense, p. 1, p. 132. [39] Ibid., p. ii, p. 87.

the mere temporal condition of things; it inheres in the divine constitution and is for all eternity.'

"The prospect for any man, who goes out of this life resolute in sin, may well make him tremble for himself, and may well make us tremble for him.

"No one can object to the second (B) statement; but the difficult point is to reconcile it with the first (A)." [40]

30. Patton, Rev. William W., D.D.:

"One of the signs of the times in connection with religion is the tendency to substitute feeling for thought, and vague dreamy sentiment for careful reasoning. This applies particularly to the doctrine of the final perdition or damnation of the wicked, as held by the Christian Church of every age; a doctrine either doubted or denied in our days.

"Let us do more solid reasoning, and rely less on mere sentiment in this matter of the perdition of ungodly men. We are only to be driven from our doctrinal position by cogent arguments based upon justice and reason. Universalism in this country, after denying the orthodox dogma of the eternity of future punishment, proceeded to reject the Godhead of Christ, the Trinity, the vicarious atonement and the entire Evangelical Scheme." [41]

31. Patton, Rev. Francis L., D.D.:

This distinguished writer answers the following questions: "Is eternal punishment consistent with the infinite justice of God? Is it compatible with His infinite goodness? Is it in keeping with His designs in the creation of the world?" His three affirmative replies are solid, convincing and irrefutable.[42]

32. Pritchard, Rev. C. W., Minister in Friends' Church and editor of the *Christian Worker,* Chicago, Ill.:

"No human opinion, but the divine word alone is the source of truth concerning a future life. The consciousness shown to exist after death forbids the (Lutheran) idea of the soul sleeping or of annihilation. No foundation for doubting the fact of endless punishment. The theory of a further probation beyond the grave is both rationalistic and unscriptural." [43]

33. Porter, Rev. Noah, D.D., LL.D.:

"I hold that there are reasons for holding that the doctrine of eternal punishment is not offensive to the moral sense, so as to require us to deny that Christ has taught it, or to affirm that, if He has, Christianity cannot come from God. When it is once admitted that God may, consistently with His attributes of justice, wisdom, and holiness, permit sin, which He hates, and tolerate the sinner that commits it, it cannot be said that He is morally bound not to create a being which, He foreknows, will persevere in sin even to the bitter end.

[40] Ibid., p. i, p. 71.
[41] Ibid., p. i, p. 76.
[42] Ibid., p. i, p. 78
[43] U. C., p. 737.

"Moreover, no man can blame Almighty God for giving man free will, a gift whose power He respects though sinners may abuse it. Now, what is hell but the inevitable result of the ill use of freedom by the commission of sin? No other probation is to be expected in the life to come." [44]

690. 34. Reid, Rev. William, of United Presbyterian Church, Edinburgh, the author of "Everlasting Punishment and Modern Speculation":

The conservative Christian believers of Scotland, and, in fact, of Christendom at large, have reason to be thankful to this distinguished author for his able production, which I was fortunate enough to secure through my old friend, Mr. Thomas Baker, the industrious London bookseller.

In Rev. Reid's valuable work are presented and solidly defended the leading arguments in favor of the orthodox doctrine of hell's interminable pains; and the fallacies, both ancient and modern, devised against that dogma, are thoroughly sifted and triumphantly refuted.

The following are the headings of the principal chapters:

"I. The eternity of future punishment is taught expressly in the Bible.

"II. The present life is our only probation.

"III. Eternal punishment is the vindication and triumph of law.

"IV. The eternity of future punishment is essential to the harmony of Christian doctrine."

He then states the leading grounds on which answers to objections are to be based:

"I. Eternal punishment is consistent with divine goodness.

"II. It is likewise in harmony with God's justice.

"III. Future punishment is not intended to be disciplinary, corrective, or reformatory, but to be punitive and instrumental in the vindication of the moral order violated by sin.

"IV. Future punishment is not disproportionate to the demerit of sin.

"V. Future punishment not annihilation.

"VI. Universalism not Scriptural."

691. This author spoke so well on the orthodox side of the Christian dogma that we willingly forgive him for his utter misrepresentation of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. After saying that some theory better than purgatory might have been found, which would be more in accordance with Scripture representations, he puts forth his own doctrine thus: "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." But, as to Scripture texts warranting such a novel view the reverend author is ominously reticent, and this for the best of reasons, for both he and others have

[44] Defense, p. i, p. 35.

looked in vain for Scriptural support of the gratuitous theory. Failing in this, he resorts to conjectures. After admitting that death sanctifies no one, he adds: "May we not conclude that in that hour the believer is favored with some special grace, a grace adequate at the time of need?" Here again we ask him: What testimony, Reverend Sir, have you at hand from your Bible to justify your conjecture?

Of the Russian Czars, who refused to adopt the calendar corrected under the auspices of Pope Gregory XVI, it was said that they preferred to be at war with the stars rather than to agree with Rome.

Of the Reformers and their disciples, the Protestant ministers, we may rightly say, that when speaking of purgatory, rather than to agree with the Roman Catholic Church, they prefer to disregard the teachings of the Bible as well as the principles of reason and common sense.

35. Roe, Rev. E. P.:

"That man is to be pitied whose best hope for the future is that there is no hell. How many are to be found in our midst eager to snatch at any straw of evidence leading to show to their anxious credulity that future retribution is but a bugbear of theologians!

"Hence the bold speculation in which deluded souls indulge, which asserts that somewhere, somehow, at some time, they will reascend again and recover what has been lost. For one I do not wish to take any such chances. The most severe and somber of the theologians will admit that the doctrine of eternal happiness is in the Bible as truly as that of endless punishment." [45]

36. Schultze, Rev. Augustus, President of the Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, Pa.:

"The punishment of the wicked will be everlasting exclusion from God's presence, together with utter misery and wretchedness. The doctrine of the Moravian Episcopal Church has been thus briefly stated in the General Synod, convened at Herrnhut, Saxony, in the year 1879: 'In the Brethren's Unity it is forbidden to teach either the doctrine of the final salvation of all men, or of the annihilation of the wicked.' Physical death does not end conscious existence, but is a birth into a world of eternal realities. No second probation for those who have wilfully rejected the offer of salvation tendered to them in the present life. The Cross of Christ is found to be a more powerful incentive to conversion and holiness than the fear of damnation." [46]

37. Smith, Rev. Joseph T., D.D., late Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, Baltimore, Md.:

"On the day of judgment the wicked, both soul and body, will be banished from the presence of the Lord into everlasting misery. The Westminster Confession and Catechisms, our au-

[45] Ibid., p. i, p. 110. [46] U. C., p. 778.

thoritative accepted symbols, know nothing of annihilation for the wicked. Salvation, possible only in the present life and time, is the creed of the Church Universal. All souls, at death, enter upon a fixed and unchanging state of eternal happiness, or eternal misery. Hence no second probation warranted by God's word. The duration of the doom of the wicked is described by the same term as is applied to the blessedness of the righteous.''[47]

38. Stewart, Rev. Moses, Professor in the Theological Seminary of Andover, Mass.:

''A more fearful question cannot be raised by the human mind than by asking whether the punishment of the wicked in a future world is to be regarded as endless? We find that in Holy Scripture,[48] the punishment is characterized by the same adjective (everlasting) as the reward; and if life be endless in this case, then the punishment must also be endless. If not, the whole declaration has no intelligible meaning. I have heard of many persons being converted on a dying bed to a belief in future punishment who had all their life time maintained the contrary doctrine; never yet have I heard of one who in the like situation was converted from the common belief to that of thorough Universalism. God, the Supreme Governor of the universe, possesses certainly the right to protect the moral order in the world, to enforce the observance of His laws, by immuring in His prison such of His rebel creatures as cannot be permitted to go at large without jeopardizing that order and interfering with and marring the harmony, peace, and happiness of the universe, over which He rules. Is He not a competent judge of the evil and gravity of sin, and of what is necessary for the promotion of His glory, the furtherance of His benevolent designs, and the well-being of His faithful servants?''[49]

692. 39. Talmage, Rev. T. De Witt, D.D., LL.D., Pastor of the Brooklyn, N. Y., Tabernacle, Presbyterian:

In our opinion, his utterances deserve special attention.

''I appeal not to human authority, or human opinion, but to that one Being who only can tell me whether there is a hell. That Being is God. My quotation then under this head will be from Christ, His only-begotten Son: 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'[50] But you say: 'Is not this figurative?' The Bible sixteen times says it is fire. You say: 'I don't believe it, and I won't believe it.' Then be consistent and pitch your Bible into the stove. Paine was consistent in denying the doctrine of eternal punishment, for he rejected the whole Bible, although in his last moments he howled with so much terror that his nurse fled from the room. I have nothing much to do with objections against eternal punishment. I will simply state that God fifty-six times in the plainest, unmistak-

[47] Ibid., p. 805.
[48] Matt. xxv. 46.
[49] Defense, p. i, p. 115.
[50] Matt. xxv. 41.

able, stupendous, and overwhelming way declares that there is a hell." [51]

[Tom Paine was not only an unbeliever but a scoffer and a blasphemer. Conscious at death of his criminal career, he cried out to be delivered from the awful guilt which he felt hung over his soul. But remorse instead of release was his portion, and in one final piercing shriek of commingled pain and dread he surrendered his soul to the Supreme Judge.]

40. Taylor, Rev. William J. R., D.D., Pastor of Reformed Church, Newark, N. J.:

"Eternal judgment and eternal punishment. There are but two places and states in the invisible world; namely, heaven for believers and hell for unbelievers. According to the Bible, the source and authority relied upon for doctrinal light and truth, the scriptural death of the soul is the state of alienation from God. Future punishment is not remedial or reformatory; hence there is no restoration from hell, nor annihilation of the wicked. Perdition is as real as salvation." [52]

41. Thwing, Rev. Charles F., D.D., of Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, and editor of the Chicago *Advance*.

The author, after refuting six false theories on final retribution; namely, Agnosticism, death of the Soul or Materialism, Universalism, Restorationism after temporal sufferings, Annihilation of the impenitent, and the scheme of a second probation after death, approves the Christian dogma according to which at death the righteous are saved; the wicked condemned to eternal punishment. This doctrine is to be held as proved until stronger evidence in contradiction is presented.[53]

42. Tyler, Prof. W. S., D.D.:

"The teaching of Christ [54] cannot but leave upon the mind of the unprejudiced reader the impression, deeper and stronger than almost any other, that there is no salvation, no help, no hope for those who reject or neglect Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. After death there is an impassable gulf between the righteous and the wicked.[55] The resurrection is to life on the one hand, and to damnation on the other. The judgment is a finality, otherwise its whole description by Christ Himself is a solemn farce. The utter and irretrievable ruin is not the death of the body, or the annihilation of the soul, but conscious misery after death: it is ceaseless, endless torments.[56]

43. Williams, Rev. Meade C.:

"The truth of the future, endless punishment of the reprobates is distinctly taught in the New Testament by the preaching of John the Baptist, by the four evangelists, the Apostles Peter, Paul, and Jude and, above all, by the Lord Jesus, who

[51] U. C., 867. [52] Ibid., p. 881. [53] Ibid., p. 915.
[54] Matt. xxv. 41, 46; Mark ix. 42, 47.
[55] Luke xvi. 26. [56] Defense, p. i, p. 23.

is pre-eminently the Revealer of this severe and awful truth. It is a telling fact that the greater part, and the most terrific part of the Bible's communication of this truth is found in the words of the meek and tender Saviour. Both the fact of future punishment and its eternity have been spoken by His lips." [57]

We add here, in the order of their lifetime, some additional testimonies of prominent non-Catholic writers and divines of an earlier date asserting the orthodox doctrine regarding the duration of final retribution. They are all taken from the volume quoted above, namely, "The Unknown Country." We shall simply cite short sentences taken from their writings:

44. Jeremy Taylor (A. D. 1613–1667):

"What comparison will there be between burning for a hundred years' space, and burning without interruption, as long as God is God?" [58]

45. Archbishop Tillotson (A. D. 1630–1694):

"Considering in what terms the threatening of the Gospel are expressed, we have all the reason in the world to believe that the punishment of sinners in another world will be everlasting." [59] A difficulty proposed by this author, which is solved in Part IX (nn. **645**, **646**), proves his strange inconsistency.

46. Archbishop Whately (A. D. 1787–1863):

"On the whole, the Scriptures do not, I think, afford us any ground for expecting that those who shall be condemned at the last day as having wilfully rejected their Lord, will finally be delivered." [60]

CHAPTER IV

ARGUMENTS OF PROTESTANT DIVINES AND OTHER NON-CATHOLIC WRITERS AGAINST ETERNAL PUNISHMENT ANALYZED AND REFUTED

693. We are now about to examine and analyze the heterodox views of some Protestant divines on the all-important topic under discussion, the duration of retribution in the world to come. The arguments they allege in their support will be quoted and refuted; by doing this we will dislodge them from their negative position and thus firmly establish the truth of our thesis. To these opponents, if yet among the living and to the deluded advocates of their erroneous views, we recommend a serious reflection on the following remark:

Let our adversaries understand quite clearly what they are doing. They are not merely rejecting the teaching of the Universal Church, of the whole of Christendom; they are not merely repelling the most solemn declarations of all inspired writers, the

[57] Ibid., p. 112. [58] U. C., p. 52. [59] Ibid., p. 52. [60] Ibid., p. 53.

prophets, apostles, and evangelists; but they are moreover repudiating the most precise, solemn, and emphatic assertions of Him, whom countless multitudes of the faithful revere and worship as the Son of the eternal living God. If the theory of private judgment and free, individual interpretation of Holy Scripture forces them to the sweeping denial of all the authorities witnessing to the truth of endless punishment, this fact alone is sufficient to brand it not only as unscriptural, but also as supremely unreasonable and absurd. Both men and their theories are known by their fruits—"*Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos.*" —"By their fruits you shall know them," the infallible test given by the infallible Teacher, Christ. (Matt. vii. 16.)

694. As I had occasion to notice in the preceding chapter, our main sources of information concerning the views, opinions, and tenets of Evangelical preachers and ministers of different Protestant denominations are two; namely, "The Future Life, a Defense of the Orthodox View, by Eminent American Scholars," and the volume entitled "That Unknown Country, or Future Retribution, according to the Opinions of Scholars and Divines of the Present Times."

Our task will be to examine their erroneous views, and analyze the proofs, if any are alleged, by which they attempt to defend them.

We dispose, first of all, of the three heterodox writers who contributed their essay to the book designated "Defense." In this symposium, out of twenty-four writers, only three held the negative view on the future everlasting retribution.

695. 1. Henry Ward Beecher: In a sermon that created quite a sensation, he tried to comfort poor sinners that might fail in this life by holding out to them the prospect of a second trial or probation in the next. He then draws a very hopeful conclusion, saying: "Future punishment may be eternal, and yet not a single individual be eternally punished on account of reformation and change in the future life." As we have shown in Part IX such a theory bristles with absurd consequences and is, moreover, flatly contradicted by many passages of Holy Scripture. Universalists and other opponents of everlasting hell frankly acknowledge that not a single passage can be cited either from the Old Testament or from the New which even hints at a continued or second probation after death. The following is the candid admission of an American writer, to which we had occasion to refer before:

"I have long searched with anxious solicitude for a text in the Bible which would even *seem* to favor the idea of a future probation. *I cannot find it.*"[1]

On the other hand, we need not detain the reader by a refutation of Beecher's arguments, for the simple reason that he does

[1] See Oxenham, Catholic Eschatology, p. 145, note.

not allege a single one. The *ipse dixit* has no value with sane American thinkers unless it be sustained by some serious proofs.[2]

696. 2. Whiton, Rev. James, wrote an essay entitled "The Teaching of Christ Respecting the Duration of Future Punishment."

He says: "The claim to Christ's authority in favor of the doctrine that future punishment ends in extinction is at most a dubious claim."

The arguments we adduce in this and the three preceding parts of our work dispose entirely of this dubious claim, and prove beyond the shadow of a doubt the endless duration of the infernal pains and of the reprobates enduring them whether demons or men.

He then puts to himself the question: "Did Christ teach that future punishment is endless?" After quoting the classical texts of Mark ix. 42–47 and Matthew xxv. 41, 46, which embody the clearest testimonies alleged by both Catholic and Protestant divines, he concludes:

"The words of Christ yield, at most, the doctrine of an indefinitely continued future, but not of an endless punishment."

Here we have private interpretation in full swing. If the clearest texts are susceptible of two mutually contradictory interpretations, then no testimony of Scripture, however plain, can be said to bear a specific meaning; and the Book containing God's written revelation becomes worse than useless. And yet our Protestant brethren take that very Book as the only safe guide to salvation.[3]

697. 3. Canon Farrar: This late divine was reckoned as one of the chief and ablest opponents of endless punishment. In his "Eternal Hope,"[4] he says:

"Where would be the popular teachings about hell, if we calmly and deliberately erased from our English Bible the three words 'damnation,' 'hell,' and 'everlasting'?"

We answer: Those popular teachings, that is, the doctrine held by Christendom during the last nineteen hundred years, would be just where it was before, if Canon Farrar should do so foolish a thing. As well might a man ask where would be the law of gravitation, if he should jump off the top of the Woolworth building in New York? We should say the law would be where it was before. The most important question for the man to ask is not where the law of gravitation would be, but where he himself would be? But the reverend prelate forgets to ask himself another question. Are those three unwelcome words to be found only in the English Bible? Are they not contained in hundreds, nay thousands, of other versions, and in countless manuscripts of the New Testament safely stored up in the

[2] Defense, p. i, p. 73. [3] Defense, p. i, p. 15. [4] Page 77.

archives of the learned world? The Word of God endureth forever, for "heaven and earth," said Christ, "shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."[5]

For the benefit of those reformers who, like old Martin Luther and the late Canon Farrar, feel inclined to tamper with Holy Writ and to expunge from here and there some—to them—objectionable terms, we would recommend a serious reflection on these concluding words of the Apocalypse: "I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this Book. If any man shall add to these things God shall add unto him the plagues written in this Book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City."[6]

698. 4. Abbott, Rev. Lyman, D.D.:

"Unending conscious sin and torment not a Bible doctrine."

"Man is like all other animals, *mortal*. Immortality is conferred on man not by creation, but by redemption."

The first assertion, supported by no proof of any kind, is contradicted by the general belief of all Christian nations and by hundreds of Scriptural texts which point out the fearful results of conscious sins for sinners. These Scriptural testimonies will suffice:

"They [the wicked] have said, reasoning with themselves, but not right: no man hath been known to have returned from hell."[7] "We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us. Such things as these the sinners said in hell."[8]

I am fully aware of the fact that our Protestant dissenters will discard the authority of the Book of Wisdom reckoned by them among the apocryphal—that is, uncanonical and therefore uninspired—records of the Old Testament. To reject sacred books as non-authentic because the Jews excluded them from their canon, is an old heretical shift noted and refuted by St. Augustine. Speaking of this very Book of Wisdom the holy Doctor writes: "Who sees not that the canon of the Church of Christ is of more authority with all true Christians than that of the Jews? In fact, we have no other assurance that the books of Moses, the four Gospels and other sacred writings are the true word of God but by the Canon of the Church."[9]

(For an exhaustive treatment of this question see Bishop Mullen's work entitled "The Canon of the Old Testament.")

To refute the second assertion, that man is no better than a quadruped, we do not need either the testimony of Scripture or the authority of Christendom; reason alone suffices to prove the immortality of man, as has been shown and done in Part III of our work.

[5] Luke xxi. 33.
[6] Apoc. xxii. 18, 19; Defense, p. i, pp. 89, 92; p. ii. p. 87.
[7] Wis. ii. 1. [8] Ibid., v. 6, 14. [9] Lib. de Praedestin. Sanctorum, c. xiv.

As to the third assertion, that man's immortality is the work not of creation, but of redemption, we have only two short remarks to make. In the first place we call to the reverend gentleman's attention these words of Scripture, which have not the remotest reference to redemption: "God created man to His own image." "And the Lord breathed in his [Adam's] face the breath of life and man became a living soul."[10]

Immortality can be called the fruit or result of redemption only in the sense that, if man fulfils God's will, through the merits of Christ's redeeming blood, he will attain immortal, endless happiness in God's kingdom. But if man rebels against God's will, breaks His commandments and dies impenitent, he will purchase to himself immortal misery, endless punishment in Satan's abode. (See nn. **560, 562.**)

As to our quotations from Scriptural books eliminated by Protestants to what we stated above we add: When Protestant Biblical scholars shall have given us plausible reasons why those so-called Apocrypha should be rejected as uninspired and unauthentic, we shall refrain from citing them.[11]

5. Adams, Rev. John C., of Universalist Church, Chicago, Ill.:

"All punishment must be disciplinary and remedial."

"The good of the race is manifestly attainable by a terminable punishment."

His first statement is disproved by all the Biblical texts which represent the present life as the period of probation and the future as the place of retribution. (See nn. **531, 630, 632.**)

We have already shown that to be a false principle which assumes that all punishment must aim at the reform of criminals. Human jurisprudence of all civilized nations condemns this principle as radically wrong.

As to the second assertion, we simply remark that Almighty God's judgment as to what is best for mankind happens to differ from that of the Universalist divine. To deter man from sin, the cause of all human woes, present and future, and to secure his happiness here and hereafter, Divine Wisdom strengthened His law by both the remunerative and the punitive eternal sanction.

The Chicago parson thinks differently. The reader will decide for himself which is the better plan for the welfare of the race.[12]

699. 6. Baker, Rev. L. C., Presbyterian, Philadelphia, Pa.:

"Man not inherently immortal, but a future life is secured for all through resurrection from the dead."

Here the author evidently confounds the soul of man with his body. It is not the soul that rises from the dead, since it is naturally immortal, and therefore exempt from death. Therefore, resurrection, as described by St. Paul,[13] applies exclusively

[10] Gen. i. 27; ii. 7. [11] U. C., p. 65. [12] Ibid., p. 77. [13] 1 Cor. xv.

to the body. The term "resurrection" can also be applied to the soul, but always and only in a spiritual allegorical sense. Hence St. Paul writes to the Colossians: "If you be risen with Christ, seek ye the things that are above."[14] And according to the Apostle, it is owing to the merits of the risen Christ that divine grace, and future happiness, its fruit, are granted to us. "Jesus Christ, our Lord, was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification."[15]

"Endless torment not one of the alternative states announced by Christ."

"We notice the absence of the doctrine of an endless hell from all the apostolic addresses, and from their subsequent epistles."

Our Presbyterian divine could not ignore the striking text of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: "In a flame of fire giving vengeance to them who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer eternal punishment, in destruction from the face of the Lord."[16] This was, of course, a somewhat embarrassing text; but our Biblical scholar, bringing to the rescue his peculiar exegesis which, if not honest, is at least ingenious, tells us that "here St. Paul speaks of eternal destruction to be vented on men living on earth and not on the dead." How men living on earth can "suffer eternal punishment," he did not think it necessary to explain.

"A destruction of body and of soul awaits the sinner unless the soul be saved in Christ."[17] (See nn. **615, 618, 682.**)

In this brief sentence we find two glaring blunders, viz.: the theory of the annihilation of the impenitent, and that of voluntary immortality through reconciliation with Christ. (See nn. **550, 620.**)

7. De Pressensé, Rev. E., D.D.:

"The doctrine of eternal punishment is not conclusively derived from Scripture texts, for these, according to our interpretation, permit the hope of final restitution."

Let our reader recall the overwhelming multitude of authorities that stand for the truth of eternal punishment as clearly established in Holy Writ, and then it will be easy for him to decide what to think of the opposite interpretation given by the Rev. De Pressensé.

"There are," he adds, "Bible implications of redemptive activity beyond the grave."[18]

Let our learned Biblical scholar bring a single text from the Bible to prove his contention, if he can. (See nn. **531, 630, 632.**)

8. Fowle, Rev. T. W., of Oxford, England:

"Christ has not spoken at all of the eternally lost and the eternally saved. By His declaration of future life He was thinking and speaking not of the future lot of human beings, but of

[14] Col. iii. 1. [15] Rom. iv. 24, 25. [16] 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.
[17] U. C., p. 133. [18] Ibid., p. 243.

human beings under present mundane conditions. Hence the punishment is simply the exclusion of unbelievers from the blessedness of the Christian religion, and the reward is the realization, in all its fulness, of Christian life.'' [19]

The term ''everlasting'' applied by Christ, both to the reward of the just, and to the punishment of the wicked [20] is simply ignored by our English parson, for if introduced at all it would spoil his novel interpretation altogether. That the words of Our Saviour on the life to come should be perverted from their obvious meaning can be understood well enough, but only the Rev. Mr. Fowle and men of his stamp can have the effrontery to state in a printed essay that Christ said nothing in His Gospel about the reprobates and the elect.

It would be a waste of time to detain our reader with any further discussion with a man that reasons or rather unreasons in this fashion. We may say with Dante:

''Speak not of them, but look and pass on.'' [21]

700. 9. Gladden, Rev. Washington, of Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio:

''Certain it is that great changes have taken place in the belief of the Church on future punishment during the last century.'' This assertion calls for an important, nay necessary, distinction. That any change has occurred in the belief and teaching of the Catholic Church in the last or any preceding century regarding future retribution, we emphatically deny. But that some radical change did take place among Protestant divines and their deluded adherents as to the belief in eternal punishment, during the last forty or fifty years, is a fact which no one can ignore. St. Paul [22] graphically expresses the situation when, referring to the heretics of his own time, said of them that 'They are tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.' '' [23]

Here we are reminded of Bossuet's pithy argument against all sectarians. ''Truth is as unchangeable as He who revealed it. You change, therefore you do not possess the truth.'' Our Congregationalist then insinuates that death does not close the opportunity of a second trial; though, he adds, this additional offer of grace may be spurned. To confute this somewhat modern theory we have but to appeal to the many testimonies of Holy Scripture showing that this life is, in God's designs, the appropriate and exclusive period of probation. In them we are bidden to work out our salvation, while it is yet day,[24] to remember that time is short, to pass our time of earthly sojourning in fear,[25] etc. Now, unless we are prepared to resolve these solemn utterances of the apostles and of Him who sent them into the empty verbiage of modern fashionable preachers, we must attach to those words the meaning, which they obviously convey, and firmly believe that

[19] Ibid., p. 285. [20] Matt. xxv. 46. [21] Inferno iii. 1–5.
[22] U. C., 381. [23] Eph. iv. 14. [24] John ix. 4. [25] 1 Peter i. 17.

the period of mercy, grace, and probation is limited to the present life. (See nn. **489, 633.**)

701. 10. Hale, Rev. Edward E., Unitarian minister of Boston, Mass.:

"I reject the error of the Augustinian theory that the earth is for man a scene of prescribed moral trial." [26]

It is a question here not of any theory, whether Augustinian, Thomistic or any other, but of a stern truth, explicitly taught in divine revelation, confirmed by the dictates of reason, and sanctioned by the general consent of mankind. Time is for eternity, the present life is but a preparation for the next.

He then boldly states: "An assumed judicial process of man's examination after death is a degrading injury to the morals of mankind."

First of all, the fact that every individual of the human race that attains the use of reason is to undergo before the Lord a scrutiny of his whole responsible life is no assumption, but a revealed truth pervading the contents of Holy Scripture, asserted in the monuments of tradition, and testified even by Gentile nations. As St. Paul informs us: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." [27]

Moreover, only a perverted use of his mental faculties could have led the reverend gentleman to utter an ethical blunder, such as this, which is opposed to the jurisprudence of every human code, based on the responsibility of man for his free actions. It is precisely the consciousness of the account to be rendered to the Supreme Judge that deters men from evil-doing, and greatly contributes to elevate, purify, refine, and perfect the morals of mankind.

11. Hopkins, Rev. John H., S.T.D., of Burlington, Vt.:

After stating the orthodox Christian doctrine concerning the eternal happiness of the righteous and the eternal damnation of the wicked he says: "This statement fairly represents the common opinion of church people from the earliest ages until now, all the world over." So far so good. "But," he adds, "the Church Universal has never in any General Council defined this view of the question as being a matter of faith." Here the reverend divine commits a historical error, utterly unpardonable in one who is supposed to be a master in Israel. The Fourth Lateran Council, the Twelfth Ecumenical, held in the year 1215, defines that "all men will rise to be punished or rewarded according to their works, either evil or good; the former will incur a perpetual punishment with the devil, the latter will obtain everlasting glory with Christ." [28] Supposing that, consistently with his opposition to Rome, he disregards the decisions of her councils and the definitions of her Pontiffs, can he deny this startling fact, that, as we have shown, all Protestant churches, down to

[26] U. C., p. 413. [27] Heb. ix. 27. [28] D. Enchiridion, p. 189.

the Evangelical Alliance of 1846, have admitted in their conventions the doctrine of eternal future retribution? And can he ignore the fact that this identical doctrine is believed and professed by the schismatical Eastern Church?

Then, endorsing the milder view devised by Origen, he tells us that "it has been held and taught from the earliest ages and never condemned." Church History tells us that this so-called milder view has been anathematized by Popes and Councils, and that its chief advocate, Origen, was condemned as a heretic by Pope Vigilius in the year 540, and by the Second Council of Constantinople, the Fifth Ecumenical, in the year 553. Owing, then, to the preceding utterances of the Church of God and other official condemnations by Popes and Councils of the milder view, the conclusion of the Rev. J. H. Hopkins "that there is full liberty among us for the private interpretation of such passages of Holy Writ as bear upon the lot of the righteous and that of the wicked," must be rejected as altogether untenable. Only outside the fold of the Catholic Church, in the reign of chaos, such aberrations are possible.[29]

12. Isaacs, Rev. Abram, Editor of the *Jewish Messenger*, New York:

"There is punishment for the evil-doer in this world and in the next; but the divine purpose is to reclaim, not to destroy, or doom to everlasting torment." [30]

We fully accept this pronouncement of the learned Rabbi, as it perfectly agrees with the Catholic doctrine, which teaches that God destined all men to perfect happiness and furnishes to them the means necessary to attain it. Hence, only such individuals as will throw away their chances of salvation will miss their destiny and incur the fate of the reprobates.

"The doctrine of everlasting punishment was never part and parcel of Judaism."

This statement, besides being flatly contradicted by the several testimonies alleged above from the Old Testament, has been triumphantly refuted by Msgr. Freppel in two lectures delivered before the French Academy in Paris, February 28 and March 7, 1873. In them, by appropriate quotations from the Book of Job and other passages of the Old Testament, and from the Jewish historian Josephus and modern writers, he proves against the Academicians Derenbourg and Renan the constant belief of the Jewish people in the immortality of the soul and in the everlasting rewards and punishments of future life.[31] (See n. **269.**)

"Old-time Universalism spans the Bible with the rainbow of universal salvation."

The only remark we have to make on this somewhat poetical effusion of the learned Rabbi is that it bears the ugly stigma of

[29] U. C., p. 477. [30] Ibid., p. 527.

[31] See Vigouroux, La Bible et les Decouverts Modernes, vol. 1.

Origenism anathematized by the Catholic Church and officially rejected also by all Protestant denominations.[32]

13. Miner, Rev. A. A., Universalist Church, Boston, Mass.:

"No divine revelation, rightly interpreted, affords any evidence of the continuance of sin, and its retribution in the resurrection."[33]

What a bright prospect is held by this surpliced advocate of Universalism to the members of his flock and to all poor sinners at large! According to him, we possess indeed a clear revelation of the eternal joys of paradise, as our earthly tabernacle, when dissolved, is to be succeeded by a heavenly one. Neither are their anticipations of the forthcoming bliss to be disturbed by the fear of a contrary fate, for as he assures us, "The progress of Biblical exegesis, in the increasing light of our time, scarcely finds more acceptable evidence of future retribution in the New Testament than is contained in the Old."

The reader that has perused the pages of the four preceding parts knows what to think of such gratuitous, erroneous assertions of this New England sage.

702. 14. Moomaw, Rev. Elder, B. C., of the German Baptist Church, Buena Vista, Va.:

"The great preponderance of Scriptural testimony points to an extermination, certain destruction, a blotting out of the finally impenitent and ungodly, as though they had not been."[34]

Here we have the theory of annihilation of the wicked pure and simple. To prove his thesis from Scripture our German Baptist alleges from the Apocalypse a text that proves exactly the opposite. He says, "For them [the finally impenitent] remains that lake of fire, the second death, which was prepared for the devil and his angels."[35] Then he adds: "Nothing could be more terrible than those familiar symbols of annihilation."

Here we have two remarks to make. In the first place, as the wicked would welcome total extinction as a great boon, neither they nor we can see anything terrible in it. Secondly, there is another text in the Apocalypse which our Elder cannot ignore, but which he simply overlooked: "In those days man shall seek death, and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them."[36]

"The second death destroys both body and soul."

In a former passage of his essay he tells us that the impenitent are exterminated, and then states that for these same exterminated impenitent sinners is allotted a lake of fire. That his interpretation of the meaning of "second death" is utterly arbitrary and entirely erroneous appears from the following words of Apocalypse: "And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death."[37] The words "hell" and

[32] See Th. Martin, La Vie Future, c. ii. [33] U. C., p. 693.
[34] Ibid., p. 947. [35] Apoc. xx. 14. [36] Ibid., ix. 6. [37] Ibid., xx. 14.

"death," as authorized interpreters tell us, are a personification of the devil and the wicked, who are to be thrust into the dungeon of hell. Hence, the first death is incurred by the sinner in his lifetime by the loss of sanctifying grace, which is the spiritual life of the soul. The second death is eternal damnation of both soul and body. This is so true that of the just, who have preserved the life of grace and died the friends of God, the same inspired writer says: "In these the second death hath no power." [38]

Extinction would indeed be a most welcome fate to the demons and the wicked, and whilst we know that they very ardently desire it, we are assured at the same time from the Book of Apocalypse quoted above that they are doomed to the most bitter disappointment.

As to the words "destruction," "perishing," "perdition" and the like, we have seen in Part IX that they cannot be interpreted as equivalent to annihilation. Hence the whole structure built by our German Baptist on the weakening foundation of these terms topples over and falls to the ground. (See n. **682.**)

15. Peabody, Rev. A. P., Professor at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.:

"A righteous retribution in the world to come, but no literal eternity or torment for any created being." [39]

This is quite a bold assertion, which the university professor would find it not only difficult, but impossible, to prove; yet he gives us at least one reason or argument by saying that "the punishment will last as long as sin lasts." This proof of his has been very unfortunately chosen, for it cuts the ground from under his own feet, and can be easily retorted against him. Hell will last as long as sin lasts; agreed. But as there can be neither available sorrow, nor repentance beyond the grave, the impenitent carry their sin to the judgment seat, and can no more expel it from their soul than they can end their own existence. St. Mark in his Gospel, referring precisely to those that die impenitent, refusing the grace of reconciliation with their Maker to the bitter end, says of them that "they shall be guilty of an everlasting sin." [40] The punishment then will last as long as the sin will last, that is, everlastingly.

703. 16. Stokes, Prof. George Gabriel, President of the Royal Society, and Professor of Mathematics, Cambridge, England:

"The scientific and moral arguments concerning a future life are supplemented by the teachings of revelation." [41]

The contrary is the correct view, for the complete knowledge of future life can be obtained only from God's own revelation;

[38] Ibid., xx. 6. See Scripturae Sacrae Cursus Completus—Migne. vol. xxv, p. 1417. Elucidatio in Apocolypsim, auctore Martino Wouters.
[39] U. C., p. 712. [40] Mark iii. 29. [41] U. C., p. 823.

a knowledge not exactly supplemented, but only confirmed by philosophical and ethical arguments.

Contrary to his view, the Scriptures teach both that man has a spiritual nature, and that his soul is naturally immortal, for the Creator made it so. See proof of the soul's immortality from Holy Scripture in Part III, where we also show that what revelation teaches, reason confirms.

"Immortality was made possible through redemption."

Man's immortality, as we have just seen, is the work of creation. Redemption, by applying the merits of Christ to man's immortal soul, renders it worthy of heavenly glory—a glory reserved also to the body at the resurrection.

"The intermediate state between death and resurrection may be regarded as a state of unconsciousness."

This old heresy is revived by Luther and was condemned by Pope Benedict XII, A. D. 1336, and the General Council of Florence, the Seventeenth Ecumenical, under Pope Eugenius IV, A. D. 1438. Both authorities define: First, that the souls of the just, if entirely purified, are at once admitted to the beatific vision. Secondly, that the soul that departs from this life stained with actual or personal mortal sin, is immediately condemned to hell.[42]

17. Summerbell, Rev. N. D. D., of the Christian Church:

This reverend preacher of the so-called Christian Church gives us a sermon or an essay bristling with unwarranted assumptions and groundless assertions. With him it is a foregone conclusion that all the "wicked, after judgment, will utterly perish and sin will thus be brought to an end." After stating that no Scriptural text intimates endless life in hell, he gives what he designates as the four foundations for faith in the endless life of the lost. These are

1. The worm that dieth not.
2. The fire that is not quenched.
3. The endless torments.
4. Everlasting punishment.

None of which, he writes, explicitly states the doctrine. These reckless denials call for no refutation at our hand, for they refute themselves.[43]

704. 18. Swing, Rev. David I., Pastor of the Independent Church, Chicago:

"There exists no revealed doctrine about the nature of future punishment as to its quality, degree, or duration; and no revealed doctrine as to who will be called upon to endure it."[44]

It will not be difficult for our readers to dispose of this sweeping denial, an unmitigated falsehood, if they only glance at the formidable array of Scriptural testimonies alleged in Parts VI and VII from both Testaments, bearing unmistakable evidence

[42] D. Enchiridion, pp. 216, 217, 236. [43] U. C., p. 833. [44] Ibid., p. 849.

to the existence, quality, degree, and duration of the infernal pains. As to the second part of his statement, "who will be condemned to that punishment," we freely admit that there exists no revelation determining which special individuals may be said to be among the reprobates, with the solitary exception of him whom Christ designated as the "son of perdition." But this much has been clearly revealed, that endless punishment shall be the lot of the wicked, the impenitent—of all, in short, who depart from this world enemies of God, with the canker of mortal sin in their souls. Two testimonies will suffice: "Know you this, and understand that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person (which is a serving of idols) hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."[45] "But the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire, and brimstone, which is the second death."[46] We agree with the Rev. Swing that "God, who gave man his free volition, will not resort to force and compel the depraved nature to repent and love holiness." But then, since hell is abolished, we ask him, how shall those depraved individuals be brought to repentance, and eventually to heaven? This will be done, he answers, "in a second life, when those souls will pass from the present existence into a richer evidence of God, and climb rapidly above that low moral valley in which they dwell here." This arrangement suits his theory admirably; but will he find from Genesis to the Apocalypse any Scriptural warrant for this second probation in the world to come? (See nn. **182–489**.)

705. 19. Thomas, Rev. H. W., Pastor of the People's Church, Chicago, Ill.:

"The doctrine of endless punishment is not taught in the Scriptures, nor in the early Creeds, but is a heresy."[47]

It would be interesting to know how it happens that what the whole of Christendom believed and held for the last nineteen centuries must now be altogether abandoned as heretical. The Rev. Thomas answers: "Old beliefs, in the progress of thought and knowledge, are being modified and improved." As the old beliefs are nothing else but divinely revealed truths, we are at a loss to understand how divine truth, which is as immutable as God Himself, could ever be transformed, changed, or modified by any progress of learning at all. There can be no more change in God's revelation than there can be in Euclid's theorems of mathematics. But can progress; higher criticism; free, individual interpretation of God's word destroy the fact of the distinct revelation contained in Holy Scripture of the Christian dogma of endless punishment for the wicked, or can those novel unscriptural theories blot out the creeds of Christendom, pro-

[45] Eph. v. 5. [46] Apoc. xxi. 8. [47] U. C., p. 897.

claiming the terrific truth of everlasting woe to all the impenitent, past, present, and future?

"Had Jesus Christ intended to teach endless punishment, there were Greek words in abundance that would have placed the subject beyond doubt, but He did not use them."

Here the reverend pastor confounds two things which should be carefully distinguished; namely, the language used by our Divine Saviour in His public life and the language in which the several parts of the New Testament were written. Though Christ had a perfect knowledge of all languages, yet He made use of the language then most common in Palestine, and that was not the Greek, but the Aramaic tongue, also called Syro-Chaldaic. As to the Books of the New Testament, they were all written in Greek, the most widespread language of those times, with the exception of the Gospel of St. Matthew, which he wrote in the language of his own people; that is, in Hebrew, or rather Syro-Chaldaic, though his Gospel also was soon translated into Greek, it is said, by St. Matthew himself.

As we have shown in Part VII, the words of the Greek text of Matthew's xxv. 46, express precisely what our Saviour meant; namely, the endless duration of the punishment of the reprobates. (See n. **485.**)

"In the end, however, existence will prove a blessing and not a curse to all souls."

Existence will prove a curse, not indeed to all souls, but only to those to which Christ's fearful sentence can be applied: "It were better for him, if that man had not been born."[48]

The Rev. Thomas also asserts that "the doctrine of endless punishment is not taught in the early creeds."

To remedy his evident deficiency in Church History, we quote here some of the earliest Christian Creeds containing the very profession of faith in the existence of eternal life for the just and eternal punishment for the wicked, which he says is missing.

1. The Formula of Faith approved by Pope St. Damasus (A. D. 380).[49]

2. The Athanasian Creed, also called the *Quicumque*, from its initial word, which reproduces the belief of the primitive Church in the following clear terms:

"At the coming of Christ, all men shall rise with their own bodies, and shall render an account of their own deeds; and those who did good things shall go into eternal life; but they who did evil things shall go into eternal fire."[50]

From the preceding statements it is easy for our readers to ascertain on what side truth is to be found.

706. 20. White, Rev. Edward, of the Congregational Union, England:[51]

[48] Matt. xxvi. 24.
[49] D. Enchiridion, p. 14.
[50] Ibid., p. 19.
[51] See n. (**560**).

"The doctrine of conditional immortality and of the eternal destruction of the wicked, is what I should teach." [52]

To state this so-called doctrine of conditional, or voluntary, immortality is to refute it. In fact, what does it assume? It takes for granted that the immortality of man's soul is the work, not of creation, but of redemption, a theory already disproved. Another assumption, entirely destitute of proof, is the eternal destruction or annihilation of the wicked.

As reason, revelation, and the traditional sense of mankind prove the immortality of the human soul, as demonstrated by the numberless works that fill the libraries of the civilized world, the contrary assertion of the Rev. Edward White falls to the ground as an unwarrantable assumption unworthy of any man that respects himself.

"Natural immortality is denied by the Scriptures, both implicitly and expressly."

See Part III, ch. v. vi, vii for contrary Scriptural evidence. None of the numerous texts he alleges can be shown to prove the destruction of the wicked. (See also nn. **615, 618, 682.**)

The compiler of "That Unknown Country" gives us, in copious summaries, the view of several Biblical scholars, mostly Germans, on the question we are treating. As they are all opposed to the orthodox Christian doctrine, we deem it advisable to discuss briefly the reasons they allege in behalf of their opinion, especially because some of them pose as the founders of new theological schools, as opposed to the traditional dogma of the eternity of the punitive sanction.

707. 21. Schleiermacher, Friedrich (A. D. 1768–1834):

He and other Lutheran theologians "are inclined to the idea that an opportunity of hearing the Gospel will be granted, beyond the bounds of this life." He then concludes thus: "Therefore we may, at least with equal right, admit the milder view, of which there are traces in the Scriptures,[53] viz., that, by the power of redemption some day there shall result a universal restitution of all human souls." [54]

In the first place, we see here a sweeping rejection of the Seventeenth Article of the Augsburg Confession, the Creed of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: "Christ shall appear to judge, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give unto the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys; but ungodly men and the devils shall he condemn unto endless torments." [55]

The theory of a second probation need not detain us here, as it has been amply refuted in several pages of this work. His Scriptural quotations afford no countenance to his theory of universal salvation, for the first text, "For He [Christ] must reign until He hath put all His enemies under His feet," [56] refers to

[52] U. C., p. 929. [53] 1 Cor. xv. 25, 55. [54] Works, vol. iv, p. 503.
[55] Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, vol. iii, pp. 17, 18. [56] 1 Cor. xv. 25.

the final triumph of Jesus Christ at the last judgment when His enemies will be publicly confounded and condemned to the everlasting punishment they deserved.

Our exegetical scholar is more unfortunate still in his citation of the second text, "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" [57] The great majority of interpreters explain this passage as referring to the victory of Christ over death by His own resurrection and the resurrection of all men, particularly of the just at the last judgment; a most glorious victory over one of the chief consequences of original sin, men's death, and the ignominious corruption of their bodies in the grave.

The learned professor found it necessary to justify his departure from the Christian doctrine on future retribution by some kind of reason, and we give it here in his own words:

"If we consider eternal damnation in connection with eternal happiness, it is easy to see that the latter can no longer exist if the former (damnation) exists, for sympathy with the damned must necessarily disturb the happiness of the saved." [58]

That the blessed will know and fully realize the condition and sufferings of the reprobates we fully admit, as such a belief is based on Holy Scripture,[59] held by the Church, and taught by theologians, particularly by St. Thomas. They teach that the saints in the heavenly kingdom will certainly behold the pains of the lost, and will rejoice, not on account of the pains themselves, which the reprobates suffer, but because they see in them the vindication of divine justice, the reparation of the violated order and are thereby reminded of their own preservation from such a punishment.

All this is quite true; but we emphatically deny what our opponent asserts, that this contemplation mars or disturbs their happiness. For proofs of this statement see Part IV, ch. iv, where we speak of the heavenly happiness enjoyed by the soul.[60]

708. 22. Rothe, Richard (A. D. 1799–1867):

He is mentioned among the eminent German theologians who adhere to the theory of the eventual extinction of the wicked. This, as he tells us, "is the fate to be allotted to those who persist to the last day in their resistance of the Spirit—of those who are guilty of the unpardonable sin. To such is reserved, as a punishment, the annihilation of soul as well as body."

This error has been fully refuted in several passages of our work, to which the reader is referred. But we cannot omit noticing one of his statements, which is in direct contradiction to his annihilation scheme. Commenting on the striking passage of Matthew xxv. 41, 46, he writes: "Of the wicked is only said that during the continuance of their stay in Gehenna, their pain will

[57] Ibid., xv. 55. [58] U. C., p. 56. [59] Ps. lvii. 11.
[60] See St. Thomas, Suppl., p. iii, q. xciv, art. 1, 2, 3.

not cease, without any determination of the question whether that stay will, or will not be endless." By quoting verse 46 of that chapter, the German savant cuts the ground from under his feet and prepares his own confutation. In fact, our Blessed Lord says in the sentence against the wicked: "And these shall go into everlasting punishment." It is a question here, then, not simply of an everlasting fire, but of an everlasting punishment. Now how could a punishment be said to be everlasting unless those that are punished should also be everlasting?

Moreover, the contradiction lies in this, that, if, in his supposition, the wicked ever cease to be tormented, they will be delivered from hell and eventually saved. What need, then, will there be for annihilation?

He also gives as a reason for the extinction plan the supposed "necessary disturbance of the happiness of the redeemed"—a futile, not to say silly, argument refuted above.

709. 23. Alger, William R., Author of "Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," Philadelphia, 1864.

At present we direct our remarks, in the first place, to Mr. Alger's rejection of the Scriptural evidence derived from the New Testament, and particularly from the words of Christ Himself. To refute him we have only to call attention to the flippant tone of his language. After urging the common Universalist sophistry that "everlasting" need not mean "lasting forever," he strives to trace the doctrine of endless punishment to the erroneous traditions of ancient nations:

"Orientals, Greeks, and Jews, who had derived their belief from fallible sources, also maintained the doctrine of eternal punishment, and it is reasonable to suppose that similar language was employed by the Saviour and the Evangelists. Accordingly, if Our Lord did mean what He said, we regard it not as a part of the inspired utterances of Jesus, but as an error, which crept in among others from the surrounding nations of a benighted pagan age." [61]

Our readers will not expect me to undertake the confutation of a man who denies the divinity of Christ by making Him a teacher of doctrines borrowed from benighted paganism, and rejects the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Moreover, he admits that the final reprobation of the wicked is certainly taught by St. Paul, St. John, by St. Peter in his Second Epistle, by St. Jude, and by St. John the Evangelist in the Apocalypse. But he thinks, of course, that they are all mistaken, and he believes that such is the fact because he says so. After such views of this haughty unbeliever we are not surprised to find other similar blunders in his pages. Thus, for instance, he tells us that theologians prove the eternity of hell's punishment from the fact that the wicked confirmed in malice will be

[61] Op. cit., pp. 525, 526.

sinning for all eternity, and, on this account, they will be eternally punished.

710. The Catholic Church holds herself responsible only and exclusively for her own teaching, which is diametrically opposed to that of Mr. Alger. Her doctrine is that after the present life neither the blessed in heaven can merit greater essential glory, nor can the reprobates in hell merit greater essential punishment on account of their sins.

I advisedly use the term "essential," for, as to accidental increase of happiness in the blessed and of accidental suffering in the reprobates before the last judgment, some Catholic theologians, St. Thomas among them, hold that, as, owing to the persevering influence of the good deeds and works of the just, their glory in heaven will accidentally increase; so, by reason of the persevering evil influence of the misdeeds of the wicked, such as their irreligious or immoral writings, their sufferings will accidentally increase in hell. But no increase of happiness for the blessed, nor of pain for the reprobates, will occur after the last judgment. Therefore it is not true that hell is eternal because the damned will eternally sin.[62]

711. As seen above, according to this historian of the doctrine of the future life, all that is found in the New Testament regarding future punishment as taught by the living lips of Christ and written by His apostles and disciples is altogether erroneous because not divinely inspired, but borrowed in its entirety from benighted pagan nations. A sweeping assertion like this, implying the rejection of the whole New Testament as uninspired, should be sustained by some kind of proof. The writer is naturally expected to trace the several statements concerning the eternal pains of the reprobates to the benighted pagan nations, from which Christ and His apostles appropriated them. But the reader will look in vain through that bulky infidel production for a thread of proof of the many gratuitous assumptions with which it bristles from beginning to end.

To fully convince the reader of the absolute untrustworthiness of Alger's pretentious book we add a few more proofs to those already cited.

On page 141 he writes: "The sole passage in the Old Testament teaching the resurrection is in the so-called Book of Daniel." The equipment of this would-be Biblical scholar must be very meager indeed, since he ignores the fact that several other passages witnessing to that dogma are to be found in the Old Testament, such as the classical text of Job xix. 25; the striking description of the resurrection in Ezechiel xxxvii. 1–10; and numerous other passages, particularly in 2 Machabees vii. 9 and 14. The last two testimonies, though the books are rejected by Protestants, we quote for the reasons mentioned above. (See nn. **248, 698.**)

[62] See St. Thomas, Suppl., p. iii, xcviii, art. 6.

On page 397 he represents St. Augustine as holding Calvin's horrible creed, the predestination of a large portion of mankind to absolute reprobation independently of any foreseen demerit on their part. These are his words: "Augustine declared that a few were arbitrarily elected to salvation from eternity, and that Christ died only for them." But our learned historian does not tell us in what book and chapter that holy Doctor taught such false heretical doctrine. And if Mr. Alger has already gone to his account, we challenge any of his adherents to find those words in the writings of St. Augustine.

On page 409, somewhat annoyed at the roll of blessed and saints venerated by Catholics, he disposes of them all as pious frauds, by asserting that the Roman Catholic canonization of martyrs and saints was the same as the pagan apotheosis of the most depraved heroes of antiquity.

On page 429 he coolly asserts that the following doctrine has been publicly defended in every age of the Christian Church: "The Universalist formula—every soul created by God shall sooner or later be saved from sin and woe, and inherit everlasting happiness." This statement is absolutely untrue. This Universalist theory was condemned as a heresy by the Christian Church at Constantinople under Pope Vigilius in the year 543, that is, 1375 years ago, and the condemnation has been repeatedly confirmed. Will Mr. Alger or any of his disciples quote for us the name of any authorized Christian Synod or Council that has sanctioned and approved the doctrine of Universalism from the time of its inception down to our own days?

Many more similar preposterous assertions are spread throughout Alger's volume. The specimens already given justify us in applying Virgil's motto: "*Ab uno disce omnes.*"—"From the examples quoted judge of the rest." But more will be said in our Bibliographical Appendix, particularly about the historical part of his criticisms.

712. 24. Sherman, Henry Burton, Ph. D., Instructor in New Testament History and Literature, University of Chicago, author of "The Teaching of Jesus About the Future." Chicago, 1909.

We have in him an advocate of the heterodox, heretical, negative theory of future retribution which he strives to uphold in a pretentious volume of 390 pages. How successful he has been in his task the reader will be able to tell from some few passages, which show how reckless and inconsistent he is in his assertions throughout his book.

A. Thus, on page 265, he writes: "Apparently the evidence requires that it be held that Jesus Himself never referred to torment or fire as the form of future fate for the unrighteous." The learned instructor could not ignore the fact that our Blessed Saviour spoke at least fifteen times of the fire as a future punish-

ment, particularly in the passages reproduced by St. Mark [63] and by St. Matthew.[64] Hence he felt it his duty to assign some reason to account for his departure from the doctrine of whole Christendom on that point.

"It seems," he says, on page 295, "that it is to others, not to Jesus that we must trace these apparent accretions in the Gospels, where the future is conceived under the form of fire and torment." As for the proof of his unwarranted assumption, he thought that a university instructor is not obliged to descend to such details. But whether Biblical scholars will accept his *ipse dixit* as a sufficient proof is quite another matter.

We find a palpable contradiction between two of his statements. On page 266 he writes: "The term 'gates of Hades' does not refer to the future abode of the righteous or unrighteous." And on page 296 he says: "The place of abode after death for both sinners and righteous ones is Hades."

B. His comment on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is somewhat amazing. On page 296, quoting from St. Luke's Gospel [65] he thought it advisable to follow the Protestant versions of 1611 and 1881, and shorten the text, hence he writes: "And the rich man also died and was buried." He then explains his omission of the Evangelist's words "in hell" by saying: "At death the unrighteous are simply buried."

Everybody knows that the principal sin for which the voluptuous Dives was condemned was his utter want of charity toward the poor, represented and personified by the famished Lazarus, lying at his gate. But on page 297, Mr. Sherman, entirely overlooking this phase of the parable, takes occasion to impeach the Lord's justice in His dealings with the rich and with the poor, and discriminating against the former in favor of the latter by remarking that "he cannot help expressing his surprise at the fact that, because a man is rich now, he should not deserve felicity in the future, and because, he is poor now, he should deserve bliss in the age to come."

C. One of the strongest warnings ever uttered by Christ before His hearers is that registered in St. Luke's Gospel: "And I say to you, My friends, Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear; fear ye Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear Him." [66] How does the university instructor handle this terrific text? Very cleverly, indeed. In the first place, according to him, those words were exclusively intended for the apostles. We reply that we fully admit that Christ's apostles and disciples were present at His sermon, but that they alone heard it we emphatically deny. In fact, two verses above the text here

[63] Mark ix. 42–47. [64] Matt. xxv. 41. [65] Luke xvi. 22.
[66] Luke xi. 4, 5.

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spoken of, the Evangelist tells us that "Great multitudes stood about Him, so that they trod one upon another." [67]

Moreover, according to his supposition that the warning contained in the text here referred to was directed only to His apostles, he thus interprets it: "Christ simply meant to caution them against precipitation of action and imprudent freedom of speech, which might cause them to be denounced to the civil authorities. As to the words, "After He had killed hath power to cast into hell," all interpreters refer them to Almighty God, the Master of life and death and Supreme Judge of mankind. But our professor differs entirely from them and tells us that the individual spoken of in that text is the high priest of the Jewish synagogue, to whom he attributes the power of inflicting capital punishment, another egregious blunder, for, as we read in St. John's Gospel, "The Jews therefore said to him [Pilate] it is not lawful for us to put any one to death." [68]

713. On page 258, continuing to expound St. Luke's text (xii. 5), the university professor writes: "It is a question here of the official commitment of the criminal to the opprobrium of desecration, through assignment of the body after death to the valley of Hinnom, the Gehenna of the Gospel, the depository of the offal of Jerusalem, and of the carcasses of animals." This prerogative of assigning to the said valley is regarded as lodged in the hands of one man, him who had authority to cast into Gehenna, the high priest.

Hence, under the pen of this Biblical scholar, God, the Supreme Judge, is replaced by the Jewish high priest, and the eternal punishment of hell's fire is reduced to the burning of the body of the dead criminal in the valley of Hinnom, a logical sequence of Higher Criticism exegesis. Comment is needless.

D. On page 259, alluding to the Saviour's condemnation of adultery,[69] and to the sin of scandal to be punished by fire,[70] our New Testament instructor deals more leniently with such criminals. In his view Jesus meant that as to adulterers, only their body is to suffer the "consequences" of their "criminal deed," and this only in the present life. "The penalty of adultery is the inevitable ultimate degeneracy and ruin of the body through indulgence." (P. 259.) Let the reader compare this assertion with 1 Cor. vi. 9 and Apoc. xxi. 8; xxii. 15, and he will know what to think of the exegesis of the Chicago professor. Now, how will he reconcile this dictum with the principle that the soul is the guilty party, as the body is simply the instrument of iniquitous doings? Hence the soul must be the chief sufferer.

When, therefore, adulterers die impenitent, their bodies, consigned to the grave, undergo no pain, at least till the final resur-

[67] Ibid., xii. 1. [68] John xviii. 31. [69] Matt. xix. 9.
[70] Matt. xiii. 41, 42; Mark ix. 41, 47.

rection at the general judgment. But the soul will suffer at once the penalty of its adulterous crime in hell's fire.

714. Here is the Catholic doctrine, defined by Pope Benedict XII (A. D. 1336):

"The souls of those who die in actual mortal sin, immediately after death descend into hell, where they are tormented by the infernal pains." [71] "Do not err," says St. Paul, "neither fornicators nor adulterers, nor the effeminate . . . shall possess the kingdom of God." [72]

The examples we have adduced are more than sufficient to show that Mr. Sherman, instead of being an honest instructor in the New Testament history, has acted throughout his book as a downright perverter of that Sacred Record. Hence we recommend to his serious attention the following concluding words of the last Book of the New Testament: "If any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life." [73]

CHAPTER V

HELL ABOLISHED IN WASHINGTON, D. C., BY THE BIBLE STUDENTS AND THEIR FORMER PRESIDENT, THE LATE PASTOR RUSSELL

715. The *People's Pulpit*, a monthly sheet (price one cent) formerly edited by the late Pastor Russell, of whom we shall shortly speak, announced in big headlines this startling event: "Hell has been unanimously repudiated and officially abolished at Washington, D. C., July 7, 1912." Who, we wondered, had accomplished this mighty task? Congress in a committee of the whole, or the Supreme Court of the United States? No, for neither our federal legislators, nor our federal supreme judges have so stultified themselves. The great feat was achieved by the assembly of more than three thousand Bible students, delegates gathered from all over the United States and Canada in solemn convention assembled in the federal capital, July 7, 1917. Hence, according to this official pronouncement, all sinners, from that date on for the future, may rest at ease, for a big iron lid was placed over the mouth of hell; and to show that theirs was not a mere ceremony, but an official transaction, they purposely selected the capital of the nation as the scene and witness of their heroic, philanthropic work, intended to remove from men's troubled conscience that heavy incubus of punishment to come. But let us reproduce the resolution, approved, without a dissenting voice, by those learned Biblical students. The chairman, Mr. Ruther-

[71] Enchiridion, p. 217. [72] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. [73] Apoc. xxii. 19.

ford, in announcing it to the convention, said: "This is a hot subject for a hot day."

"We now unanimously repudiate as thoroughly unscriptural the teaching of a place, state, or condition of a literal lake of fire and brimstone for the torment of the wicked; and further, we believe from many personal testimonials that the vast majority of ministers of all Protestant denominations have privately repudiated the hell-fire theory; but have, for supposedly good reasons, hesitated fully to inform their congregations; and further, we believe, on this account, thousands and perhaps tens of thousands, are being driven into skepticism or infidelity."

To these three thousand Bible students who voted for the abolition of hell we oppose the countless millions of staunch believers in the doctrine of eternal punishment—a doctrine held and professed by the whole of Christendom during the last nineteen hundred years. Now in Congress and in every legislative body of this land, majorities rule; we may, then, easily anticipate the verdict of the American people on the vote of the Bible students in Washington, D. C.

716. As we learn from the transactions, the Washington Convention was anxious that all Protestant ministers should make a public declaration of their attitude toward this question, on the ground that it would tend to lessen skepticism and infidelity. Hence copies of the resolution were mailed to all Christian ministers, accompanied by a request for an expression of their opinion on the subject at issue. A report of their replies was soon published, from which it appears that the Bible students' resolution, rejecting hell's fire and hell itself, was fully endorsed by representatives of the following Protestant denominations:

1. The English Anglican Church.
2. All the ministers of Worcester, Mass.
3. The Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians.
4. The Congregationalists, the Episcopal Church.

To give support to the encouraging endorsement of Protestant ministers, the editor of the *Journal* gives utterance to a barefaced falsehood by asserting that the Catholic Church was noncommittal on that topic, or did not dare openly to tell the truth. The answer given by the late Rev. David Phelan, former Editor of the *Western Watchman*, is sufficient to confute the calumnious report. He referred the inquirer to the "Catholic Encyclopedia," which he said, contained the whole Catholic doctrine on the subject discussed.

Exit Pastor Russell.

717. We learned from the press that in September, 1916, he was overtaken by a sudden death on the train from Los Angeles to Kansas City, Mo. We need not dwell on his somewhat checkered career.

I came across an estimate of this prolific preacher by an old

married couple, and I might as well give it here in their simple, popular style:

"Pastor Russell," said the husband, "knows what he is talking about; he studied the Bible all his life. He says: hell is all bosh, a bogey foisted off by the theologians of the Dark Ages on a lot of gullible peasants. He holds that there is no such place as hell, and no eternal punishment mentioned in the Bible. All that the Bible means is that all men will sleep at death in the tomb till judgment day, when Christ will call them forth and bring them all to heaven. Of course, my wife, a priest-ridden Catholic, does not believe in this Pastor Russell at all; she calls him an unctuous old mountebank, a thoroughgoing impostor and humbug preacher."

Holy Scripture tells us of the departed that "their works will follow them."[1] Whether this self-appointed Pastor's doings during the last forty-five years of preaching, and writing against several points of Christ's Gospel and the universal doctrine of Christendom on the existence and everlasting duration of hell have been for him a passport to heaven, it is not difficult to decide. One thing is sure, he knows now, wherever he be, more about the true meaning of the Bible than he ever knew before.

CHAPTER VI

PRESENT ATTITUDE OF MANY PROTESTANT AND OTHER NON-CATHOLIC DIVINES AND PREACHERS TOWARD FUTURE, ENDLESS RETRIBUTION

718. It would certainly be rash on my part to assert on my individual authority that the majority of non-Catholic ministers and preachers of our times either do not themselves believe in eternal punishment or, if they believe in it, they have not the courage to preach it. Hence I thought it incumbent on me to sustain such charge by authorities that cannot be suspected of undue bias or prejudice. They are for this reason all culled from the Protestant field, and as the passages are duly quoted, inquisitive readers may easily verify them, if the works from which they are extracted happen to be within their reach.

1. Talmage, Rev. T. De Witt, D.D., Presbyterian Pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle:

"Out of a hundred of our sermons ninety-eight are on the love of God, the mercy of God, on the kindness of God; and if we preach two sermons out of the one hundred in regard to the indignation of God against sin and His warnings of the future punishment, we are styled *sulphuric*. Our American preaching

[1] Apoc. xiv. 13.

needs to be reconstructed as to the doctrine of God's indignation."[1]

2. Tyler, Prof. W. S., D.D.

Referring to the Christian ministers who for some reason or other refrain from bringing up in the pulpit the subject of hell, he says:

"The anxiety of some to relieve distressed souls is praiseworthy. But are they more tender and loving than Christ? Are they wiser than He? Has He not repeatedly spoken of that awful abyss? For ourselves the only question is: What did the heavenly Teacher preach? The saying of the master—*ipse dixit*—was the end of all controversy in the schools of the old Greek philosophers. Shall it not be so, *a fortiori*, for a greater reason in the school of the Divine Master, Christ?"[2]

3. Williams, Rev. Meade C.:

"It would seem that in modern times comparatively little use has been found in our pulpits for the teachings of the Scripture concerning the destiny of those who sin against God and reject His salvation. Unbelievers have noticed this, our neglect, and have made much of it. Our liberal Christians, in their conventions, have been charging for years that we were afraid to declare it, and in their ridicule of the doctrine they have likened it to the old discarded belief in witches, and to the fossil remains of animal monstrosities of an extinct age.

"As to myself I often think of the telling fact that the greater part and the more terrific part of the New Testament communications of this truth is found in the words of the meek and tender Saviour. Yes, Jesus Christ is pre-eminently the Revealer, not only of future punishment, but also of its eternity."[3]

4. Helffenstein, Rev. J., D.D.:

Speaking of the preachers that refrain from declaring the whole Counsel of God, he writes:

"What immense responsibility must rest upon their ministry! Entrusted as they are with a message of life and death, salvation or damnation, it is not only at the peril of their hearers, but at their own peril that they withhold any portion of God's truth."[4]

5. The statement of the Bible students embodied in their resolution regarding the abolition of hell. (See nn. **715, 716.**)

"We believe from many personal testimonials that the vast majority of ministers of all Protestant denominations have privately repudiated the hell fire theory, but have, for supposedly good reasons, hesitated fully to inform their congregations."

719. In the *North American Review* for June, 1900, there appeared what we might call a sensational article entitled "What has become of Hell?" by the Rev. George Wolfe Shinn, D.D. Though it contains some very sensible thoughts and reflections on

[1] U. C., 874, 875. [2] Defense, p. i, p. 34. [3] Defense, p. i, p. 112.
[4] Apoc. xxii. 19; Defense, p. i, p. 52.

that awful subject, yet we must say, it is openly unjust to the Catholic Church and her ministers. The author states that hell is now tabooed generally; and then, reckoning Catholic bishops and priests among other so-called ministers of the Gospel, and condemning them all in a lump, says of them: "We do not hear of hell in the pulpit, nor see any reference to it in modern theological books." Then he adds: "We are simply trying to establish the fact that there is (in Christian tradition) an unbroken chain of testimony to the belief in the existence of hell down to comparatively recent time. Now, almost suddenly, certainly with remarkable unanimity, men have well-nigh ceased to talk about it."

But is it true that this chain of testimony has been broken—that there has been in this regard a very notable change in theology at the close of the nineteenth century? We answer these questions with a distinction. Outside the pale of the Catholic Church, among the upholders of the theory of private judgment and the disciples of the recent so-called Higher Criticism, we freely admit. But within the Catholic Church, among all the believers in her infallible authority, we emphatically deny. And we challenge the Rev. Dr. G. W. Shinn and all his disciples to allege a single instance of any Catholic writer, of any authorized theological work, containing any doubt or denial of the existence and eternity of hell.

But perhaps the Catholic Church, with her two hundred and ninety millions of members, is an inappreciable quantity in the estimate of that learned divine. Whatever may be his opinion, it remains true that the doctrine of the Catholic Church is identical with that professed by St. Polycarp (A. D. 156), quoted by himself, who said to the proconsul who was about to sentence him to death by fire: "With fire, which burns for an hour or so and is extinguished, thou dost threaten me; but dost thou not know of the fire of the future judgment, and of the eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly?"

720. Hence the sweeping assertion of Rev. Mr. Shinn, regarding the tabooing of hell's punishment by the Christian pulpit, is misleading, as he completely ignores the fact that the Catholic Church and her ministers never failed to proclaim to the faithful the terrible, stern, but real fact that the world's Redeemer announced in the clearest language the existence of endless punishment for the impenitent in the world to come. No one needs be surprised at the constant, uncompromising, and consistent attitude of the Catholic Church regarding the proclamation of this truth. As the Oratorian Father H. S. Bowden very pertinently observes in his preface to Hettinger's "Revealed Religion": "The Catholic Church cannot modify any of her doctrines, say that of eternal punishment, or tamper with any

dogma that has been divinely revealed, even though by so doing she would win half the world to her fold. Her mission is to convert the nations to the truth, not to adapt the truth to them; and every attempt to depart from this line of conduct must be fatal to the cause of truth and to the souls which she is to save from perdition."

721. When we reflect that the doctrine of hell and its eternal duration is explicitly contained in divine revelation and constitutes the very cornerstone of Christianity, we fully agree with the Rev. George Wolfe Shinn that it is an unpardonable offense on the part of Protestant ministers of the Gospel and other non-Catholic teachers of religion to waver and hesitate in declaring this truth, or so to veil and obscure it as to empty it of its full moral weight and import. In the face of the momentous interests at stake, such proceedings are not charity, but cruelty and unfaithfulness. For if indeed so terrible a doom awaits the final impenitent, the surest guarantee for escaping it hereafter is not to forget it now. "Let them go down alive into hell."[5] Let them think of hell while living, lest they should fall into it when dead, as St. Bernard comments on those words of the Psalmist. If the doctrine of eternal punishment be a revealed dogma, as it is proved by all conservative Christian writers, it is treason to God and treachery to man to withhold or disguise it or tamper with it by keeping the faithful in ignorance of what Almighty God has explicitly revealed.

722. Evangelical preachers and writers, who, though believing in the Christian dogma of endless retribution, yet lack the courage to proclaim it to their flocks; or, intimidated by the influential portion of their congregation, fear to incur their displeasure, ought to bear in mind the following warnings of Holy Scripture:

"You have strengthened the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his evil ways and live."[6]

"It is a people that provoketh to wrath, and lying children, children that will not hear the law of God. Who say to the seers: speak unto us pleasant things, see errors for us."[7]

723. From our analysis in the two last chapters we found that of the notable ministers and writers of different Protestant denominations, forty-six hold the orthodox Catholic doctrine on eternal punishment and twenty-one are opposed to it. Here we must call to the reader's attention this striking fact that, while the forty-six conservative divines invariably assign valid reasons for their orthodox belief, the twenty-one recalcitrant ministers, on the contrary, allege in support of their view such flimsy and weak arguments as may be compared to paper wads fired against a dreadnought. For this reason we found it easy to refute them.

[5] Ps. liv, 16. [6] Ezech. xiii. 22. [7] Isaias xxx. 9, 10.

They are nearly all supporters of such theories as future probation, restorationism, Universalism, or annihilationism. But in the course of my investigations of their unscriptural and antichristian views, I could not help noticing this startling fact, that they scarcely ever take into account the attribute of God's justice, the enormous offenses committed against Him, and the necessary reparation due to Him. Now, not only Catholic theologians, but also the conservative Protestant divines themselves adduce in their writings those very arguments to justify infliction of endless punishment. Of course our adversaries expatiate on the infinity of divine love and the far-reaching benefits of redemption, without, however, laying much stress on the necessity imposed by the Lord of observing His Holy Law and of fulfilling the condition required for profiting by the work of redemption. Such a condition is clearly pointed out by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "And being consummated, He [the Son of God] became to all that obey Him, the cause of eternal salvation."[8]

[8] Heb. v. 9.

PART XI

RETROSPECT AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Travelers who in their journeys are wont to write a diary or itinerary in which they record, day by day, the leading incidents they have encountered, when they reach the end of their excursions and are again safe at home, doubtless take considerable pleasure in recalling past experiences as they run over their note-book and dwell with special interest on the recollection of the principal events and scenes they have met with.

724. Having now come to the termination of my five years' literary journey—I began my work on Future Life in 1913,—for my own satisfaction, quite legitimate, I hope, and for the benefit of readers anxious to see the logical connection of the successive parts and chapters in my book, like a traveler that goes over his itinerary—I intend to take a retrospective view of the various questions treated in my humble production. The principal advantage that may be derived from this brief summary or epilogue will be to realize once more the fact that Catholic doctrines are consistent throughout, and so logically connected with one another as to constitute one compact, harmonious whole, such as must appeal to the intelligence of every fair-minded thinker and convince him of the fact that a result like this bears undoubted evidence of the truth which Catholic teaching contains, for truth alone can be consistent, coherent, and harmonious throughout.

After stating in the Preface the principal motive that finally induced me, in spite of misgivings, to inflict on the public another lucubration on a subject highly distasteful to many people, I courageously plunged into my undertaking.

I take in the Introduction a general bird's-eye view of the questions to be dealt with, and allege the chief reasons why a book of this kind, which should interest every human individual anxious to save his immortal soul, might be helpful in confirming staunch Christian believers in their faith, and in leading stray sheep, veritable prodigals, back to the fold and to their Father's home, which they had thoughtlessly abandoned.

In those preliminary observations I chiefly aimed at convincing my readers of the all-important fact that no discussion can

be more advantageous to any human individual than that which concerns his highest personal interests of time and of eternity, and that is the true knowledge of the divine purpose prefixed to him, and of the means infallibly leading and helping him to secure it. No mortal that makes the proper, wise use of his mental faculties, will venture to leave this world without first inquiring how he can attain in the next the interminable happiness which God promised to every member of the human family.

CHAPTER II

RETROSPECT—A SYNTHETIC SUMMARY

725. Part I answers the most important question that a rational being can put to himself; namely, the purpose, meaning, or end of his brief existence upon earth, in accordance with the wise and bountiful designs of our Creator.

The answer is found to fully satisfy the claims of the human mind and the aspirations, cravings and tendencies of the human heart.

We are here to procure God's honor and glory by submission to His holy will and by so doing to secure to ourselves the happiness of eternal life. To put us on our guard against the danger of missing forever such a lofty destiny, this Part is rightly concluded by showing that there is only one impediment to the attainment of our last happy end, an impediment depending entirely on our free will, and that is the utter neglect of God's service, inevitably accompanied by grievous divine offenses.

To point out to man the way leading him securely to his last end God has proclaimed His commandments and laws.

726. Part II asks the pertinent question whether Almighty God, the Supreme Legislator of mankind, is indifferent whether men, His creatures and subjects, observe those laws, or transgress them, that is, whether man fulfils his end or neglects it. The answer is an emphatic negative, as it is shown by the fact that our Sovereign Lord and Lawgiver, to enforce the execution of His commands, the observance of His laws, has furnished them with a double sanction, remunerative and punitive, that is, perfect, immense, eternal happiness to the observers, and complete misery and everlasting torments to the violators of His commandments.

As both sanctions are everlasting, they naturally imply the endless duration both of the just in heaven and of the reprobates in hell.

727. Part III establishes this truth on the strongest founda-

tions and brings to bear in favor of immortality an array of arguments and proofs which it is utterly impossible to resist, and they are:

1. The authority of divine revelation.
2. The dictates of human reason.
3. The pronouncements or definitions of the Catholic Church.
4. The unbroken testimony of tradition.
5. The general consent of mankind.

728. Part IV explains the import of remunerative sanction, by displaying before us the teachings of divine revelation on the happiness of the just souls after death, and of their glorified bodies after the general resurrection. It also exhibits the doctrine of Catholic theology concerning the new state of men's bodily organism in the life to come.

It is a self-evident and most cheering truth that Almighty God, our Sovereign Creator and Supreme Benefactor, is more anxious, more desirous that we should attain our last happy end than we could be ourselves.

729. Part V is devoted to the demonstration of this Catholic truth, which it does by displaying before us the manifold helps furnished to us to that effect. In fact, the benefits of nature, the benefits of grace, and the promised benefits of glory are all directed to that same noble purpose, by affording needed aid in our struggles, and encouraging us to persevere by the divine prospects of heavenly recompense.

To these are added the infinite merits of Christ, by whose application sin, the chief and only obstacle to the attainment of heavenly glory, is canceled, and the sanctified soul becomes capable of increasing its reward by meritorious works.

Then comes the very practical discussion on what should be man's attitude toward divine revelation, announcing to him the magnificent prospects held out to all sincere believers by the Catholic Faith. To adults, that prove the sincerity of their faith by the holiness of their life, heavenly happiness has been promised, and, when granted after death, it will enhance the joys of the blessed by this additional, exquisite delight, that their bliss is not only, though principally, the gift of God's infinite goodness and liberality, but also the reward of their free, faithful co-operation to divine grace, according to those cheering words of our Divine Lord registered in the Apocalypse: "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne."[1]

For baptized children that die in infancy the possession of heaven is a sheer gift of God's immense goodness.

At this juncture we find it necessary to treat the question of the condition of infants who die unbaptized.

Catholic theologians whose teachings the Church has never

[1] Apoc. iii. 21.

in any way disapproved, hold that such children, though excluded from the beatific vision, suffer no sensitive pain whatever and even enjoy a degree of natural happiness, amply sufficient to make them not only perfectly resigned to their condition, but also to render them quite contented with their state.

730. The punitive sanction furnishes the subject matter of Part VI. After showing how divinely revealed truths are demonstrated, the following propositions are proved by the same divine authority:

1. The existence of hell and of its torments is a stern reality.
2. Fire is hell's chief torture.
3. To this are added other infernal pains, also divinely revealed.
4. This punishment is incurred by death in mortal sin. And it was precisely for the purpose of deterring us from sin that God in His wisdom and justice has created hell for the chastisement of the wicked angels and reprobate, impenitent human creatures. He warns us in order that we may not force Him to punish us.
5. Several of the aforementioned penalties are confirmed by the testimonies of ancient authors, as well as of modern writers, up to our own times.

731. In Part VII is found a thorough discussion and stringent demonstration of hell's most awful characteristic; namely, the eternity of its duration, which is proved by:

1. The testimony of Holy Scripture.
2. The teaching of the Catholic Church and of the several separated churches, both the Oriental schismatic communions and the Christian heretical denominations.
4. The authority of the Greek and Latin Fathers.
5. An unbroken chain of other witnesses.
6. The testimony of the martyrs.
7. The writings of both ancient and modern authors, that is, of both the heathen and the Christian witnesses.

732. Part VIII supplies the reader with principles intended to facilitate the solution of difficulties raised by numerous opponents against eternal punishment.

733. Part IX adduces and answers, in the form of a dialogue, the chief objections urged by rationalists, Unitarians, infidels, Universalists, and other adversaries against the existence and endless duration of hell's torments.

We here submit to the reader the following serious reflection: When we recall the undeniable fact that the whole of Christendom, whether Catholic, schismatical, or heretical, professes its belief in the everlasting punishment allotted to sinners dying impenitent, all must admit that it is treason to God and treachery to men for any minister of the Gospel to hide this awful truth from his flock and thus rob them of the most powerful means

men possess for avoiding sin and escaping its eternal penalties in the world to come.

734. Anxious to benefit our separated Christian brethren also, we devote to them the whole of Part X, in which we state the orthodox belief of the Reformed Churches and of many distinguished Protestant divines, and refute our and their opponents.

735. Part XI contains a retrospective summary of the whole work, and an alphabetical list of the numerous authors quoted or consulted in the preparation of this book.

CHAPTER III

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

736. It would be next to impossible to find a subject that has proved more important and interesting to writers than that of the future life. Hence the reason of the extraordinary number of volumes that have been issued on that topic. Take for instance, as an evidence of our statement, the production of Ezra Abbot, entitled, "Literature of the Doctrine of Future Life," in which he furnishes to the learned world a catalogue comprehending upwards of 5300 works classified under these chief headings:

1. Origin and Destiny of the Human Soul.
2. Doctrine Concerning Future Life among Non-Christian Nations, both Ancient and Modern.
3. Future Life, According to Christian Theology.
4. Rewards and Punishment in Future Life.

The author is a writer remarkable for his varied and accurate scholarship, and his untiring industry has produced a work which no student, however accomplished, can consult without reaping notable profit.

737. The astounding multitude of such works in every language, both of ancient and modern times, by authors of every nationality, proves the firmness with which belief in a future existence and consequent retribution is entrenched in man's moral constitution. The very denial of this truth proves by its spasmodic eagerness and efforts to disprove it how deeply rooted it must be in human consciousness. If, for instance, there really were no such thing as an eternal hell awaiting impenitent, sinful human creatures, or if its existence could not be demonstrated, absolute indifference toward the notion would long since have been the mood of all mankind, and no argument, either for or against it, would be constructed.[1]

[1] See Article of William G. D. Shedd, in North American Review, vol. cxl.

Not to swell this book to an undue size, I will limit my bibliography exclusively to the authors either quoted or frequently consulted in its preparation.

For the sake of order they are distributed alphabetically to facilitate reference. The titles of French works are given in the original, as that language is generally understood. The titles of works in other modern languages are given in English.

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(N. B. We here record the names and works of some distinguished non-Catholic writers, who defend the doctrine held and taught by the Catholic Church on man's supernatural destiny and future retribution. The views of some prominent non-Catholic writers opposed to this doctrine have been stated and refuted in our Part X.)

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(N. B. This is a very learned production covering a wide field as shown in the following headings): A. The Hebrew Prophets—Inspiration. B. The Poets—Faith and Feeling. C. The Philosophers—Faith and Reason. D. The Apostle Paul—Personal Revelation. E. Jesus Christ—Faith and Fact. F. Trust and Immortality. The Grounds of Faith.

Goulburn, Rev. Edward M., Everlasting Punishment.

Hyslop, James H., Science and Future Life.

(N. B. This is the work of a clear-headed scientist, who presents in his volume most lucid and satisfactory proof of a future life, the result of searching conscientious investigations.)

Hodge, Rev. J. Aspinwall, Recognition After Death.

Hudson, J. Thomson, LL.D., A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life.

Jefferson, Rev. Charles E., Why We May Believe in Life After Death.

(N. B. This is one of the Raymond F. West Memorial Lectures, founded in Leland Stanford Junior University at Palo Alto, California in 1910. A very able production doing full justice to the threefold subject proposed by the Founders, viz., Immortality, Human Conduct, and Human Destiny.)

747. Mr. Charles E. Jefferson is a brilliant, thoughtful writer, and I availed myself of several of his happy suggestions contained in his lecture "Why We May Believe in Life After Death," which he delivered at Stanford University, California, a few years ago. It is, however, to be regretted that his otherwise excellent production is marred here and there by undue deference and concessions to the temper of modern rationalistic scientists and by more than one contradictory passage, which leave the reader uncertain about the orthodoxy of the writer on

the main point at issue, the true destiny of man and the soul's immortality.

A few passages are deemed sufficient to justify our criticism. On page 39 he writes: "Incontrovertible and absolute certainty on the human destiny is not obtainable." On page 48 he says: "The knowledge of our destiny is the result of a reasoned conviction, a spiritual acquisition maintained in the teeth of opposition." On page 134 we find the following: "Philosophy, like science, brings no incontrovertible proof of the soul's immortality." On page 152 we meet with a contradictory statement couched in these terms: "Long before the Bible was written there were arguments for immortality, which satisfied philosophic and scientific minds."

Kempson, Rev. F. Claude, The Future Life and Modern Difficulties. New York, 1907.

(N. B. Publisher's note, which we fully endorse: "The chief aim of this book is to show that the doctrine of science does not really come into collision with the Creed of Christendom. The author, being both a parish priest [a minister] and a university teacher of science, treats it in both aspects. The difficulties created by the moral revolt against crude statements of the doctrine of eternal punishment, are also dealt with, and, as far as possible, removed.")

King, Rev. George W., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Future Retribution. New York, 1891.

(N. B. A very able exposition and refutation of the chief modern theories opposed to the Christian Dogma of endless Retribution in the next world. The very best book on that subject among the works of non-Catholic writers that came within my knowledge.)

Paton, James, D.D. The Glory and Joy of the Resurrection.

Pusey, Rev. E. B., D.D. What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment. London, 1880.

(N. B. Among the several learned works that appeared in England and America in refutation of Dr. Farrar's "Eternal Hope," a plea for Universalism, Pusey's work is by far the soundest and the ablest.)

Rawlinson, The Religions of Ancient Nations.

Reid, Rev. William, Everlasting Punishment and Modern Speculation. Edinburgh, 1874.

(N. B. To what we said in the text in appreciation of this conscientious volume we add the following remarks:

With rare ability and correct knowledge of the topics he writes upon, he does full justice to these several questions:

A. Refutation of chief opponents such as the Rationalists, the Universalists, the Destructionists.

B. Future Punishment expressly taught in Scripture.

C. The Present Life our only Probation.

D. The Teaching of Both Natural and Moral Law.

E. Objections Against Divine Goodness and Divine Justice, Stated and Solved.

F. Eternal Punishment not Disproportionate to the Demerit of Sin.

G. Eternal Punishment not Disciplinary.)

Salmond, Stewart D. F., M.A., D.D. The Christian Doctrine of Immortality. Edinburgh, 1903.

Symposium, a Clerical, on What are the Foundations of the Belief in the Immortality of man. London, 1885.

(N. B. It comprises eleven contributors, among whom there is a Catholic prelate, the Right Rev. Bishop Weathers, then Coadjutor to His Eminence, the late Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster. The other contributors are non-Catholic clergymen. The Rev. Herman Adler is a Jewish rabbi, and George G. Stokes is a university professor. Of the ten non-Catholic authors, only two are opposed to the doctrine of immortality. They both advocate the theory of conditional immortality, fully refuted by us in Parts III, IX, and X.

Thompson, Robert J., The Proof of the Life After Death. Boston, 1908.

(N. B. The Editor requested by letter a large number of professional men, lay and clerical, to state their belief or opinion on the Immortality of the Human Soul, and consequent Future Retribution. As many as ninety-five responded, alleging the reasons or arguments of their respective views on the matter at issue. Of these 23 were doubtful or, better, non-committal; 41 were orthodox, and 31 took the negative side. The arguments of these heterodox writers are summed up and refuted in Part VIII.

Among the contributors we find one lone representative of the Catholic Church, His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons, who proved himself more than equal in ability to the non-Catholic contributors. His reply to the question, what he thought of man's immortality, fills seven pages, and is a veritable masterpiece, both on account of the solidity of his arguments and the choice, smooth flowing language of which he has a perfect command. He thus fully sustains the unrivaled superiority of Catholic genius illumined by faith over sectarian and non-Catholic scientific celebrities.)

The Unknown Country, or Future Retribution, according to the opinions of Sages, Scholars, and Divines of the Present Time. Springfield, 1890.

(N. B. The scope and character of this Third Symposium are fully explained in Part IX.)

Wescott, Brooke, Foss., D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge, England. The Gospel of the Resurrection. London, 1874.

748. The study of our important subject fully convinces us that the present book could not enlist the interest of the cultured people of our times unless it did fair justice to the numerous modern works written either in favor or against the Christian dogma which we have undertaken to defend. In other words, we felt that our production, to meet with acceptance, was to be up-to-date as to the authorities quoted for or against it. Hence the reason why we managed to secure the latest and ablest literature bearing directly or indirectly on the question of Future Life. To the list of authors cited above we must add the names of twelve recent writers of the Ingersoll Lecture Course. This foundation was the result of a legacy bequeathed to the trustees of Harvard University at Cambridge, Mass., in 1893. According to the provision of said legacy, one lecture is to be delivered each year on this subject, "The Immortality of Man." The lecturers, then, if they adhered to the subject proposed by the founders, were bound to treat not only of the immortality of the human soul, but also of the immortality of the other integral and constituent part of the human compound, man's body. In fact, what is the true definition of man? Sound philosophy defines man to be a rational being consisting of a spiritual soul and a material organism, the body. Now, what has been the result? Not one of the twelve lecturers stuck to the subject proposed, and consequently none of them deserved the pecuniary compensation provided for in the terms of the foundation.

Here the reader will naturally be anxious to know why the lecturers steered clear of any reference to the future, immortal destiny of the human body, and confined themselves exclusively to the soul. We know of no other reason but the following: Their reticence is accounted for because, according to Catholic teaching, the future destiny of the human body, that is, its reunion with the soul, through the final resurrection, is a miraculous event requiring the intervention of God's omnipotence, and the certainty of its future occurrence can be ascertained only from divine revelation. Now this is a Christian doctrine, which those learned lecturers either ignored or refused to accept. On this account, consistently with their usual disregard or contempt of revealed truths, wise in their generation, they preserved a dignified silence on that obnoxious topic, the ultimate destiny of man's body in the next world. It is plain, then, that only Catholics, or other thoroughgoing believers in God's revelation and consequently in the dogma of future resurrection, could do justice to the subject stated in the terms of the foundation: "The Immortality of Man." Though, according to the provision of the legacy in question, the choice of the lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, yet no Catholic name appears among the twelve lecturers. What motive may have induced the Harvard University trustees

to discriminate against Catholics, the reader may easily guess: hence we need not stop to investigate. We here append the list of the twelve speakers with the title of their respective lectures in chronological order from the year 1896 to the year 1912. The reader who may desire to peruse them will see for himself how far the speakers departed from what should have been the conscientious treatment of the subject intended and given by the founders.

749. 1. George A. Gordon, Immortality and the New Theodicy (1896).

2. Professor William James, Human Immortality (1897).

3. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, Dionysos (The Greek Faith) and Immortality (1898).

4. Professor Josiah Royce, The Conception of Immortality (1899).

5. Dr. William Osler, Science and Immortality (1904).

6. Samuel Melhoid Cutters, The Endless Life (1905).

7. William Ostwald, Individuality and Immortality (1906).

8. Chas. Fletcher Dole, The Hope of Immortality, Our Reasons for It (1907).

9. William Sturgis Bigelow, Buddhism and Immortality (1908).

10. G. Lowes Dickinson, Is Immortality Desirable? (1909).

11. George Andrew Reisner, The Egyptian Conception of Immortality (1911).

12. George Herbert Palmer, Intimation of Immortality in the Sonnets of Shakespeare (1912).

CONCLUSION

750. As we were casting about for some pithy sentence that might be cited as a fitting close of our book, we came across the following passage ending the recent English version of the ascetical masterpiece of Father Jeremiah Drexelius, S. J., "The Heliotropium," which is here reproduced with a brief addition suited to the contents of our volume on The Future Life:

"Let the Univers be disturbed by tempests from every quarter; let armed battalions close in deadly fray; let fleets be crippled, sunk, and destroyed by fleets; let the courts ring with endless litigations; still this is my chief business in life, to conform myself entirely to the one and only will of God, and, by so doing, to secure my heavenly, everlasting happiness in the world to come."

"The world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof; but he that doth the will of God abideth forever." I John ii, 17.

"Let us all hear together the conclusion of the discourse: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is all man."—Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

THE END

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